

A COMMENTARY

ON

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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PREFACE.

THIS Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles has been undertaken at the suggestion of others. In its preparation I have made use of like materials to those which are familiar to the readers of the volumes devoted to the illustration of the Gospels and Epistles in the Communion Office. Where, however, the narrative of St. Luke has been impugned I have examined the objections and have endeavoured briefly to vindicate the authentic character of those portions of the sacred history which have been objected to. Whether it arises from any defect or peculiarity of mind in myself or not, it appears to me that these objections are generally captious, fanciful, and childish, and such as, if admitted to be sound, would destroy the credit of every historical writing which we possess, whether secular or sacred. It seems, indeed, wonderful that such objections should ever have seriously been made. Most of them are not of home growth, but are importations from abroad, and they have, perhaps, been treated with the greater tenderness because they have come to us in the garb of strangers. We must, however, remember that though to refuse to the writers of another country their fair share of consideration is an evidence of narrowness of mind, yet an equal narrowness is shown in accepting their conclusions without examination, and in exalting them

above those of the writers of our own country merely because they are foreign. This latter temper is but another form of the first—an oscillation from one degree of narrowness to another.

Whilst, then, I have sought critical and historical illustrations from all quarters accessible to me, as well those stored up in the commentaries and homilies of ancient writers, as in the volumes of recent authors English and German, whether written by defenders or by impugnors of the Bible, I cannot but express my surprise at the value frequently attributed to the writings of the German critical school. It appears to me—useful as they confessedly are—that a value has been assigned to these writings wholly disproportionate to their utility. I hope and believe that I am not insensible to the merit of *Michaelis*, of the *Rosenmüllers*, of *Kuinoel*, of *Wolf*, and of others from whose labours I have derived assistance in the preparation of these volumes, but I must avow my conviction that the student of Holy Scripture will learn far more from the writings of *Biscoe*, and *Paley*, from *Hammond*, and *Poole*, and *Whitby*, but above all from *Lightfoot*, and *Gill*, and *Selden*, than he will gather from the pages of all the writers of the critical school of Germany. He who has the volumes of Bishop *Wordsworth* and of Dr. *Hackett* on his shelves has little to learn from the volumes of *Olshausen*, of *Meyer*, of *Zeller*, of *Baumgarten*, or of *Stier*.

It has been suggested that we ought to apply the same rules of criticism alike to the examination of the books of Holy Scripture and of secular writers. Properly understood, there seems no reason against adopting this suggestion, and if we disentangle the proposition from a fallacy which clings to it, the principle is a sound one. It is, indeed, to be regretted that the same rule is not more thoroughly applied, and that in criticizing the writings contained in the Bible the sound principles of secular

criticism are so frequently discarded. For what are the tests which we apply in the examination of secular writings? If the book be an historical one we take into account the nearness or remoteness of the events recorded from the lifetime of the writer, whether he were a contemporary or not: we remark the opportunities within his reach for ascertaining the truth of what he narrates: his subjection to, or freedom from, such prejudices as might naturally warp his judgment and lead him, consciously or unconsciously, to distort the truth in order to serve the interest of party: we pass in review the extent to which his account is confirmed by independent witnesses, and above all, his perfect knowledge of the subject matter about which he is writing, however that knowledge may have been acquired. In a word, we give not merely his intellectual, but also his moral faculties their due weight and consideration: his knowledge and honesty of character. Whenever we are satisfied that it possesses these qualities we accept the chronicle as a true record of facts. In scientific treatises we make, if not the same, yet a similar distinction. In Astronomy we do not think it necessary to subject the writings of a Herschel to the same kind of examination which we use in the case of a man confessedly unversed in the science about which he is writing. We defer to the profound knowledge of veteran anatomists like Hunter or Owen. We do not defer—in other words, we apply a different rule—to the statements of a tyro. We take into consideration the different amount of intellectual enlightenment which each writer brings to the examination of a matter within the reach of the intellect, adding, however, a consideration of moral qualities if the subject matter be of a complex nature. To weigh and determine the relation of mind to the matter discoursed of is an essential feature of all true criticism and cannot be disregarded. Nor is it possible—without shocking the moral sense of the world, which we have no right to do—to treat all kinds of facts in the same

way as though they were pure abstractions like the characters in Algebraic notation. The interests of the living make necessary the examination of the corpse of the dead ; but he who would illustrate an anatomical lecture by the body of a parent, a wife, or a child, would be less praised for his science than execrated for his want of natural affection. Again, we are required by that consensus of mankind which is not an accidental aberration of the mind to regard the probable or possible effects of our treatment of facts. The stone at our feet is a fact, and so is a fellow-creature ; but to hurl the one into water may be an indifferent action, to hurl the other there might amount to murder. Nor is it the same thing for a man to speculate in the same way upon the atmosphere of the moon or the qualities of carbon, and on the indifferency of injuries to our fellow-men and the violation of the laws of property or marriage ; since the one is free from harm, the other may probably lead to crime against society. A law of philology may be discussed, and, however imperfect our knowledge, little mischief can follow ; but to sap the principles of morals by way of a *tour de force*, or an academical exercise is either a piece of great wickedness, or madness. It is necessary to consider this when we examine any work, sacred or secular.

If, then, in secular criticism and the treatment of facts so wide a distinction is preserved, it follows that the claim to treat the books of Scripture without considering any distinction which may exist between them and other books with regard to the qualification of their writers, and to examine the facts contained in each kind of record as if they possessed the same weight, is not to pursue the same rule that we use in the criticism of secular books, but the reverse. To do so, therefore, would be a violation of the principle assumed, and an instance alike of unfairness and of want of common sense.

Much, however, of modern criticism on the books of the Old and New Testament goes even far beyond this in

the violation of this canon of the new school of Biblical critics. The same amount of imaginative criticism which is commonly applied by the Neo-Germanic school of English critics to the books of Holy Scripture is not permitted to be applied—common sense forbids its being applied—to the narratives of Herodotus, Thucydides, or Tacitus; and if the canons which are made use of by Dr. Davidson, Theodore Parker, and Paulus were applied to Whitelock and Clarendon among our historians, or to Shakespere and Spenser among our poets, we should be led to doubt, to disbelieve, and deny the historical character of the books of the historians, and to question the genuineness of the writings which pass under the names of the poets, and thus facts would cease to be facts to us. We hear much of the “higher criticism” and of the “inner consciousness” which are to be applied to the examination of the Bible; we never hear of these qualities or rules, be they what they may, applied to Tacitus and Pliny, so that the claim to apply the same rules in the criticism of the sacred and of secular writings ends practically with the application of a different rule in the one case from that made use of in the other.

A celebrated and erudite writer in the last century, in several learned treatises written with much apparent earnestness, denied the existence of almost all the authors of classical antiquity, and asserted, and supported his assertion with much learning and some plausibility, that the works attributed to them were forged by certain obscure monks in the middle ages, and he even so far anticipated the theories of some modern Biblical critics as to declare that the *Æneid* was an allegorical poem of comparatively recent times written to commemorate the triumph of Christianity over the Jewish synagogue. Nor does Father Hardouin stand alone in the promulgation of these reveries. Not long since one of his disciples amused himself—it is difficult to suppose that he had any higher aim than that of amusement—in arguing, again with much apparent learn-

ing, that the writings which pass under the names of Homer, of Virgil, and of Tacitus, were written in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and that under fictitious names they recount the struggles of the Neri and Bianchi; the Guelfs and the Ghibelines of that tempest-tost peninsula. These absurdities of what a modern French writer calls 'le démon de l'érudition critique,'¹ are now almost forgotten. They have hardly left any impress behind them because there were no moral reasons for their survival. The self-same absurdities, however, when applied to the books of Holy Scripture, possess a greater amount of vitality; not, indeed, because of any intrinsic probability which they possess, but from accidental circumstances. They spring, not from a true critical spirit, and exist, not because of any critical value which they possess, but only because they fall in with certain theological prejudices and necessities. Can any one for a moment suppose, if there were no moral interests involved, that the feeble objections which have been urged against the historical books of the New Testament would have been ever heard of, or if heard of for a moment, that they would have been sustained by a school of writers down to our own days? Speculative, theological, or sceptical motives, however, for the production and perpetuation of the absurd critical and historical theories by which men attempt to account for the Scriptural narrative or to explain away its teaching, do not make their theories the less uncritical, nor render the fancies of the new Anglo-Germanic school a whit more plausible than that of Hardouin in the last, or of Nordin in the present, century.

The fact that the authenticity or genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles has been impugned in some recent popular treatises and introductions to Holy Scripture, has led me to give to this Commentary more of an apologetic character

¹ Geffroy, *Rome et les Barbares*, p. 56.

than I have attempted in my previous volumes. In doing so, however, I have endeavoured to keep in view the value of the Acts of the Apostles for devotional and homiletic purposes; and I trust that these volumes may be found useful to those who consult them in the course of preparation for the pulpit. This book of the Acts is of especial value in seasons of activity within the Church, not so much, indeed, because it contains rules for the direction of the Church in doubtful matters of government as because it affords principles to be studied and applied, and shows us the early dogmatic use of the facts of our Lord's life. For as in the Gospels Christ sets before us the model of a spiritual life not by means of axioms and a scheme of divinity but by the concrete form of His own exemplary life, so in the Acts of the Apostles we have Church life presented to us, not in canons ecclesiastical and in disciplinary rules, but in the actions of a living body. Here especially the missionary to the heathen may gather principles to guide and lessons to encourage him in his toils for his Master's cause; and in the Acts of the Apostles more than in the Epistles of St. Paul—since these latter are all addressed to those already Christians—he may sit at the feet of the great Apostle to the Gentiles and learn how best to prepare himself for his arduous work and to fulfil the mission entrusted to him. It were a mistake, however, to suppose that the life of St. Paul appeals only to the missionary to the heathen: the Christian pastor and teacher will, the more he studies the life of this great Apostle and apply its lessons, be the better furnished in every spiritual work in which he may be called upon to engage, whether at home or abroad.

One remark I would make as to the references in the margin of these and of my former volumes. The books which I have consulted are, as is evident, of very different degrees of value, nor are the names of the writers cited an indication that the remark borrowed from them is ever in

the words, or that the text represents the whole opinion, of the writer named, but they are merely given to point out the source from whence the observation has been derived or suggested. More than this, when the observation or explanation given has appeared to myself at first sight original, and was in some degree so, yet if subsequently I have found a similar observation or explanation in any volume made use of in writing this Commentary, I have preferred to recommend my own thought with the authority of another rather than to claim it as my own.

In the Introduction to these volumes I have noted that the materials for a doctrinal and spiritual Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles are scanty in comparison with the ample stores of thought devoted to other parts of Holy Scripture. Such books as I have been able to procure, have been laid under contribution in the same way as those which give any value to the volumes already published by me on the Gospels and Epistles. In addition to this I have sought the assistance of friends, and acknowledge with thanks the help kindly afforded me by the Rev. S. C. Malan, Vicar of Broadwindsor, on such questions as I submitted to him, and by the Rev. J. J. Lias, Professor of English Literature in the College at Lampeter, for the trouble taken in reading a portion of the proof-sheets. To the Rev. J. M. Rodwell—whose rare and extensive philological knowledge has been always at my service, and to my friend from college days, the Rev. Dr. Fraser, Vicar of Alton, Staffordshire,—both of whom have examined the whole of the sheets of this Commentary as they passed through the press,—I have to acknowledge assistance received as well on this as on former occasions. To these friends I am indebted for suggestions which increase the value of my book.

INTRODUCTION TO

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAPTER I.—SECTION I.

NAME OF BOOK.

THE name of this book is with little variation the same in all the earliest manuscripts and versions:¹ the *Πράξεις*, the Acts, or, as in the Peshito Syriac, ‘the Acts, that is, the Histories of the Blessed Apostles.’² For a similar use of the word *πράξεις* the student is referred by critics to the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon (I. iii. 1), where *πράξεις* is used for *Acta* or *Res gestæ*.³ In the *Ethics* of Aristotle (x. c. δ) and in Plutarch in *Rom.* it bears the sense rather of *Actiones*, and of *Res agendæ vel gerendæ*, than of *Acta* or *Gestæ* (*Scapula* in *πράσσω*). Four uncial manuscripts read *τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων*, as in the *textus receptus*;⁴ the other uncial manuscripts however have merely ‘Acts of Apostles,’⁵ a

¹ “D. has *πράξεις ἀποστόλων*. The common reading is *πράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων*, contrary to the Vatican MS., which omits the article. The Sinaitic has *πράξεις* alone.”—Dr. Samuel Davidson, *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*.

² In the Muratorian fragment (circa A.D. 170) it is called *Acta omnium Apostolorum*; by Clem. Alexandrinus (died A.D. 220), in his *Stromata*, v. 12, § 83, and Tertullian (A.D. 150—220), *adv. Marc.* v. 2, it is cited as *the Acts of the Apostles*.

ACTS.

³ Justin Martyr quotes the Gospel, under the title of *τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων*, borrowing a word from Xenophon, who has *ἀπομνημονεύματα Σωκράτους*.—Westcott on the *Canon of the New Testament*, p. 95. (Second edition.)

⁴ A. E. H. L.

⁵ Note that the title in B.D. is without the definite article, it is *πράξεις* or *πράξεις ἀποστόλων*, which Lachmann, Tischendorf, Bornemann, Alford, and Wordsworth have adopted in their respective editions.

reading now generally acquiesced in. The word *πράξεις* was so identified with this book that some of the oldest versions, as the Coptic, Syriac, and Arabic of Erpenius, have retained this word, though it was not otherwise used in these languages, whilst the Ethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, and Georgian versions render the Greek *πράξεις* by a term equivalent.¹ Though the use of the word *πράξεις* in this precise sense was unusual, and was nowhere used in the meaning of a history before the publication of *the Acts of the Apostles*, yet the popularity of this 'treatise' or 'history' became so general from the moment of such publication, that a number of spurious or apocryphal writings were circulated, some in the first and many more in the second centuries, which both copied the idea of this book and borrowed its distinctive title.² Although then we may not be able to attach any value to the statements in these apocryphal volumes, nor to decide as to the amount of real history which may possibly be mingled with the fables which they contain, their number, and the fact that their writers have borrowed this title of *the Acts* for their own compositions, are proofs of the early date of the publication, and also of the general reception of *the Acts of the Apostles*, in the same degree that the publication of spurious Gospels and Epistles are evidences of the existence and popularity of the genuine.³

The chief of these apocryphal books, so far as known to us, are, (1) *The Acts of Peter*—*Acta Petri*, condemned by Pope Gelasius (A.D. 492—496), and known to us from such condemnation; though no copy has reached our times, unless this be a portion of the same book now known as *the Acts of Peter and Paul* (*Acta Petri et Pauli*),⁴ of

¹ Bleek's Introduction to the New Testament. "Interdum Græcam vocem etiam Latini servant. Hilarius ad Matthæum, 'Nam sicut libro *Prææon* continentur.'"—*Heinsii Exercit. sacræ ad Acta Apost.*

² "Non tam actis quam fabulis."—*Gasp. Sanchez.*

³ Origen speaks of a Gospel put forth by Basilides, who "lived on the

verge of the Apostolic times," and speaks of it as τὸ καθ' ἑαυτοῦς εὐαγγέλιον.—*Hom. VI. in Luc.* The Valentinians had their "Gospel of Truth," and they or other Gnostics the "Gospel of Eve," "the Gospel of Vespasian," &c.

⁴ Πράξεις Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου sive πράξεις τῶν ἀγίων Ἀποστόλων Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου.

which Tischendorf has published a critical edition, and which Thilo believes to have been written by the anonymous author in imitation of the genuine Acts of the Apostles, and as a supplement or *ῥήτος λόγος* to the writings of St. Luke.¹ This *Acta* is cited by Origen,² and is undoubtedly of very early date, even if it be not a production of the last half of the first century. In it the writer attempted to fill up the brief notice of St. Paul's journey through Italy to Rome, and professes to detail the life of the Apostle during his two years' imprisonment in that city.³ It is a book which pre-supposes the existence of the genuine *Acta Apostolorum*. (2) The next apocryphal *Acta* is the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*,⁴ undoubtedly of very early date, according to Tertullian, by whom it was quoted in the second century. He tells us also that the writer was degraded from the priesthood for writing it.⁵ (3) *The Acts of Barnabas*, which professes to be the work of John Mark, and was written probably by a native of Cyprus, though much later than Apostolic times. (4) *The Acts of Philip*, also condemned by Pope Gelasius, and (5) *The Acts of Philip in Hellas*,⁶ of a later date. (6) *The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of Andrew and Matthew*,⁷ or, as some MSS. read, of *Matthias*; the former of these is considered by Woog, who first edited the Greek original, to be cotemporaneous with the times of the Apostles, and even to have been in circulation about A.D. 80. (7) *The Acts of Matthew*, later in date than the preceding book. (8) *The Acts of Thomas*, known in the first century, and esteemed by the heretics of

¹ J. C. Thilo in Prolegomena ad Acta S. Thomæ Apostoli. Leip. 1823.

² Origenis Comment. in Evang. Joann. edit. Huet, pt. 2, p. 298.

³ "Hic defectus ut quodammodo suppleretur paulo post mortem hujus Apostoli [Pauli], circa annum Christi lxiium, à fidelibus quidam, proluxa de vita ac morte D. Pauli commentaria seu *Acta* ediderunt."—*Jo. Millii in Prolegomena ad Novum Testamentum*. Oxonii, 1707, p. xv.

⁴ Πράξεις Παύλου καὶ Θέκλης.

⁵ In his treatise, De Baptismo, cap. xvii. "If the writings which wrongly

go under Paul's name claim Thecla's example as a licence for woman's teaching and baptizing, let them know that in Asia the presbyter who composed that writing as if he were augmenting Paul's fame from his own store, after being convicted and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office."

⁶ Πράξεις τοῦ ἁγίου Φιλίππου τοῦ ἀπόστολου τοῦ Β' εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα τῶν Ἀθηνῶν.

⁷ Πράξεις Ἀνδρέου καὶ Ματθαίου τῶν Ἀποστόλων.

that time. (9) *The Acts of Thaddæus*, of which the present text is probably not much older than the sixth or seventh century; and (10) *The Acts of John*, mentioned by Eusebius, Epiphanius, Augustine, and Photius, and attributed by Innocent the First to the Manichæan, Leucius Charinus.¹ This enumeration, it must be borne in mind, is only of *Acta* which have descended to our times, which have this special title *πράξεις*, and are at present known to us. No reasonable doubt exists but that the books which remain are only a small part of the apocryphal books put forth in imitation of the genuine Acts of the Apostles, and that the number of those which have perished must have been very large, and that many of those which have been lost were probably of an earlier date than those which remain. It is thought that the *Acta Pilati*, mentioned by Justin Martyr (A.D. 114—165), has disappeared; and that the second part of the Gospel of Nicodemus, which is sometimes quoted by this name, is a different book from this *Acta*.² Whilst the Acts of the Apostles were from the earliest times received by the Church, read in the services, and inserted in the list of canonical books, these apocryphal Acts were as uniformly rejected.³ These spurious Acts, therefore, even if the date of their publication did not forbid any such conclusion, could hardly have suggested the genuine, but the genuine must have suggested the fictitious books. An examination of these apocryphal writings will satisfy every one that the critical judgment of the ancient Church was right in rejecting and condemning them.⁴ This sudden appearance of books bearing the title *πράξεις*, explicable on the hypothesis that they were put out in consequence of the general reception and popularity of *the Acts of the Apostles*, and were intended, at least some of them, to fill up with

¹ See the Codex Apocryphus, Nov. Test., by Fabricius, ii. 768—775, and Tischendorf in *Prolegomena* to his edition of the Apocryphal writings.

² See *Les Etudes sur les Evangiles Apocryphes*, par Michel Nicolas (Paris, 1866).

³ “Cætera quæ sub nomine Mathiæ, sive Jacobi minoris; vel sub nomine

Petri et Joannis, quæ à quodam Leucio scripta sunt; vel sub nomine Andreæ, quæ à Nexocharide et Leonide Philosophis; et sub nomine Thomæ, et si quæ sunt alia, non solum repudianda, verum etiam noveris esse damnanda.”—*Epist. Innocent.* 1. ch. 3.

⁴ J. C. Thilo in *Prolegomena* ad *Acta S. Thomæ*, pp. ii.—iv.

details more or less trustworthy what had been passed over by the original writer, is scarcely explicable on any other hypothesis.¹

St. Chrysostom calls the Acts of the Apostles, rather as it seems, however, from its subject matter than as though this were its title, 'The doctrine of the Holy Spirit,' and Œcumenius terms it 'The Gospel of the Holy Spirit.' It was, however, from the first cited by the Church as the History or 'Acts of the Apostles,' for though all they did in the work of their mission, and all that they spoke, was inspired by the Holy Spirit, yet the outward *Acts* were those of the *Apostles*.²

Objection has been made to the sufficiency and relevancy of the title on the grounds that the book does not contain the whole of the actions of the Apostles; that it does not take notice of all the actions of all the Apostles, but is almost wholly taken up with the Acts of St. Peter and St. Paul, some of St. John's being only incidentally recorded; and, lastly, that the book contains some actions of others who were not Apostles, as St. Stephen and St. Philip the deacon.³ As, however, the writer of this book nowhere states that he is about to record all the actions of all the Apostles, and the title of the 'treatise' is literally only 'Acts of Apostles,' πράξεις ἀποστόλων, not even acts of the Apostles; and since he does not profess to relate all the actions of any one Apostle, this objection cannot be allowed to have any weight.⁴ If this objection were accepted as valid, we should be compelled for the same reason to reject the title of almost every book secular as well as inspired. A history of Greece is properly so described, even though the writer pauses to notice cotemporary events which took place in Persia, in Parthia, in Rome, or elsewhere, if they have an influence upon the course of Grecian history; and the title of a 'History of

¹ See on these Apocryphal *Acts*, Jones on the canonical authority of the New Testament, vol. i.; Thilo and Tischendorf, as cited in preceding notes.

² Sylveira in *Opuscula*, quæstio viii. p. 100, edit. Lugd. 1725.

³ "The title is not well selected . . it is too comprehensive, it is also too re-

stricted, because individual teachers of Christianity, who were not Apostles, are mentioned more or less fully."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson's Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 206.

⁴ F. X. Patritii in *Act. Apost. Comment.* p. 1.

England' has never been supposed ill-selected because some notice is there taken of cotemporary events which happened in France, Scotland, and Ireland, so long as they affect the current of events in England.

SECTION II.

DATE WHEN WRITTEN.

WE are not dependent for evidence of the early date of the Acts of the Apostles upon direct quotations and references to this book in early writers, nor even upon its insertion in early lists of the acknowledged books of Holy Scripture, nor yet upon the early date of the number of spurious imitations, the various *Acta* or *πράξεις* mentioned in the previous section. Quotations occurring in the writings of the early Fathers are usually made *memoriter* and without regard to literal accuracy, so that we cannot always be sure that the quotation is made from a book where the same sentiment, but not always the same words, occur, and it was not the practice of these early writers to add the name of the book of Holy Scripture from which their quotations were taken. Thus, so far as we know, Irenæus was the first who named Luke as the author of this book.¹ There is another piece of evidence, however, which is peculiar to the Acts of the Apostles.

In one conclusion almost all critics — whatever their belief or unbelief may be—are agreed, which is, that the Acts of the Apostles was written by the author of the third Gospel.² A common style, a common vocabulary, and minute agreement clear to the critical eye, support the

¹ Irenæus adv. Hær. iii. 14, 1.

² "Une chose hors de doute c'est que les *Actes* ont eu le même auteur que le troisième évangile et sont une continuation de cet évangile. On ne s'arrêtera pas à prouver cette proposition, laquelle n'a jamais été sérieusement

contestée. Les préfaces qui sont en tête des deux écrits, la dédicace de l'un et de l'autre à Théophile, la parfaite ressemblance du style et des idées fournissent à cet égard d'abondantes démonstrations."—*Renan, Les Apôtres, Introduction*, p. x.

early tradition and the authority of the Church in this respect. If, then, the Gospel according to St. Luke is early quoted—and of this there is no doubt—this is a proof not only of the early existence of the Gospel, but also of the like early existence of *the Acts of the Apostles*, which, according to this test, cannot be of a date much posterior to the Gospel of the same writer. Now, from the time of St. Paul, who quotes this Gospel, and calls the quotation Scripture,¹ and places it in the same rank as the Old Testament Scriptures, from which he also quotes, down to comparatively recent times, there is hardly a Christian writer who does not make use of the Gospel of St. Luke and name it as the source from which he is quoting. Justin Martyr makes use of it repeatedly, and, as Dr. Davidson allows, is as familiar with it as he is with the Gospel according to St. Matthew and St. Mark.² As to the Acts of the Apostles, Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Church at Philippi, the city where St. Luke so long abode, cites it,³ and it appears in the very earliest list of books read in the churches, and of acknowledged authority among Christians.

In opposition to this evidence, Dr. Davidson, without, however, giving any reason for his opinion, thinks that the Acts is not earlier than A.D. 125; but even if we set aside the testimony afforded by quotations as not altogether conclusive, it is not only highly improbable but it is impossible that this book could have been written at so late a date as this, unless we accept a series of suppositions which are alike opposed to the received rules of criticism, the teaching of history, and the weight of probability. If the Gospel which bears the name of St. Luke was not written by him; if the distinct quotations made by ecclesiastical writers of the first and second centuries from his Gospel

¹ 1 Tim. v. 18, λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή. Βούν ἀλοῶντα οὐ φιμώσεις. Καὶ ἄξιός ἐστι ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ, quoted from St. Luke x. 7, not from St. Matt. x. 10, where the same sentiment occurs, but not in the same words.

² "Justin Martyr was familiar with the Gospel of Luke as he was with those of Matthew and Mark, though he

never assigns them to these authors. Their contents he quotes freely."—*Davidson's Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, p. 19.

³ ὅν ἐγειρεν ὁ Θεός "λύσας τὰς ὠδίνων τοῦ ἄδου."—*S. Polycarpi ad Philippenses Epist. A'*. Compare this with "ὅν ὁ Θεός ἀνέστησε, λύσας τὰς ὠδίνων τοῦ θανάτου." Acts ii. 14.

were taken from some book which has since perished without leaving any trace of its existence behind: if the ancients were all deceived as to its authorship, and also as to the time of its publication, then it might be possible that *the Acts* is of as late a date as that assigned to it by Dr. Davidson; but, then, it is in the highest degree improbable that these suppositions are more than suppositions, since all evidence which we possess is opposed to their truth. And if, as almost all critics agree in supposing, the title *πράξεις* was not given to this book by the writer, but was afterwards affixed to it,¹ then the number of *Acta* circulated throughout the Church and written in imitation of this book, many of them early in the second and some even in the first century, most, if not all, of which bear the title *πράξεις*, must be taken as an additional presumption that this book cannot be of a date later than that usually assigned to it, A.D. 62 or 63.

In the Muratorian fragment, which most critics agree was written between the years 170² and 196 A.D.,³ the book of *the Acts* is enumerated as received by the Church, and its authorship is assigned to St. Luke; and the writer of this fragment of a catalogue of the books of Scripture lived too near the date suggested by Dr. Davidson not to have known whether this book were a recent writing, unwritten and unknown until his own days, or that it was well known throughout the Church, and that it had been handed down from previous times. There was hardly time sufficient, within the brief space between A.D. 125, the date according to Dr. Davidson of the publication of this 'treatise,' and the date of the Muratorian fragment, for a book written at Rome to be circulated in Syria and Africa, to be translated into the languages of those countries, to be accepted

¹ Beleen, in Prolegomena to his Comment. on the Acts of the Apostles, § 1. Bleek, in Introduction to New Testament, II. p. 347. Hackett on the Acts, p. 19 (edit. 1872). Davidson, in Introduction, vol. ii. p. 206. Alford, in Introduction, ch. 1, § 4, 10.

² See for an account of the 'Muratorian fragment' Westcott on the Canon

of the New Testament, Part 1, chap. 2, § 12 (pp. 284-293); and Appendix C. pp. 466-480 (2nd edition).

³ Kirchofer following Muratori says that the Presbyter Caius, the author of this Fragment, lived about 196 A.D. Others think 170 A.D. the more likely date.

as of Ecclesiastical authority, and to have lost all trace of its novelty, so that none, even among the heretical bodies who rejected its teaching, should venture to challenge its authenticity and deny the claims of *the Acts of the Apostles* to be accepted as the genuine writing of St. Luke.¹ Again, the 'Peshito' Syriac version is assigned by competent critics to the first half of the second century, and this contains the Acts of the Apostles, with no note of any kind that would lead us to believe it was a writing of so recent a date as that given by Dr. Davidson. The most ancient of the two Coptic versions, the Thebaic or Sahidic, was probably made as early as the 'Peshito'; and the old Latin (*Vetus Latina*), in use in the African provinces of the Roman Empire, was known and commonly read before the time of Tertullian, though we are not able to say how long before his time. It existed, however, before A.D. 170.² So that, apart from the testimony afforded by quotations in early writers, this book must have been known and received even by distant Churches as early as the time suggested by Dr. Davidson as the date of its publication. When, therefore, the slowness with which a book wins its way and establishes its authority is considered, the Acts of the Apostles must needs have been far older than A.D. 125, a date, for which no authority is assigned and no reason given by the objector.

The best critics, and even those who reject its contents, fix the period of the publication of *the Acts of the Apostles*

¹ "Theodotus quotes the Acts in a treatise appended to the works of Clem. Alex. It is true his work (being a polemic against Valentinianism) cannot have been written before the close of the second century. But the other circumstances give to the citation in question great value. In the *first* place, it occurs in the works of a Gnostic. The separation of the Gnostics from the Church commenced before the second century. From that time to this they were in direct hostility; and it is very improbable that the Gnostics would accept from the Church a work which arose after their time, and which was

directly at variance with their doctrines. And, *secondly*, the expression which he employs, *οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς πράξεσιν ἔφησαν*, shows that the book must have been in existence for a considerable time; not only because it proves that the title was generally adopted then, but because a title so inapplicable to the general contents of the book could not have been given till some time after the book itself was written." — *Ebrard in the Gospel History*, p. 498, Eng. ed.

² See Westcott, Part 1, ch. 3, § 2, pp. 215—236, 2nd edit., for account of the *Vetus Latina*.

within the years A.D. 58 to A.D. 70.¹ Were we discussing the date of the publication of a book of ordinary history no objection would be raised to the earliest of these years. The abrupt conclusion, whilst Paul is a prisoner at Rome, does not admit of our believing that it was written after many other important events in the life of this Apostle had happened, as in that case St. Luke would not have failed to note them in his narrative of the acts done by the Apostle.² If, as *Baur* and others suggest, it was written in order to extend and strengthen the reputation of St. Paul, the book would not have ended without recording his subsequent labours, crowned as they were by his sufferings and martyrdom. That no notice is taken of anything after his arrival at Rome, his imprisonment in that city, and his conference with the Christians there, is sufficient indication that it was written whilst the imprisonment of St. Paul continued, or immediately after its close.

Nor is it conceivable that a book full of minute details of the labours of St. Paul, the opposition of the Sanhedrim, and the fanaticism of the population of Jerusalem, should contain no hint of the destruction of the Holy City, and the extinction of the power of the Sanhedrim, if these events occurred before its publication. Were the book, according to the suggestion of this particular school of criticism, written after that event, and written in order to enhance the reputation of St. Paul, the writer would not have

¹ M. Renan assigns this late date, but avowedly in order to escape the dilemma that, according to St. Luke's Gospel, our Lord prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, for as M. Renan disbelieves in the possibility of prophecy, he is driven to set aside all the rules and deductions of criticism as to the date of the Gospel, lest he should allow the prophecy, and he says, "La rédaction des *Actes* étant évidemment postérieure à celle du troisième évangile, et la date de la rédaction de ce troisième évangile étant fixée d'une manière assez précise aux années qui suivirent de près la ruine de Jérusalem (an 70), on ne peut songer à placer la rédaction

des *Actes* avant l'an 71 ou 72."—*Les Apôtres*, Introd. p. xx.

² "Several critics have adopted the conjecture that St. Luke's Gospel was composed during the imprisonment of St. Paul, and the Acts while he was in custody at Rome—both works, according to ancient tradition, having been written under the superintendence of the Apostle. In the absence of any decisive evidence or authority, the conjecture is rendered in some degree probable by the consideration that several of the most valuable historical works of ancient and modern times are due to the imprisonment or banishment of their authors."—*Humphry*.

omitted so favourable an opportunity of predicting this ruin, and thus claiming for him the gift of prophecy in so important a matter. So that if the book were really written after the event, and yet were the honest narration of a follower of St. Paul, the writer could not have avoided some reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. If written for the purpose of increasing the reputation of St. Paul, and full, as the imagination of some modern critics allege, of 'theological details,' then we might have expected to have found in it some alleged prophecy of the coming ruin, some denunciation of the wrath of heaven against the guilty city and people.¹

If external evidence, and the testimony of those who were in a position to know the truth of what they assert, and to test the truth of what others asserted, be of any value whatever; and if the internal evidence of a book be of any weight, then not only was *the Acts of the Apostles* written by St. Luke, but it was written about—hardly later than—the year A.D. 63. If *the Acts of the Apostles* were a book of secular history written by an ordinary chronicler, no one would question that it was written by one contemporaneous with, and an eye-witness of, the events which he is recording.

SECTION III.

TO WHOM 'THE ACTS' WAS WRITTEN.

THE preface to *the Acts* tells us that, like the Gospel of St. Luke, it was written to a certain Theophilus, and for his information. Beyond his name, we know nothing cer-

¹ The way in which Simon Magus is spoken of in the Acts renders it likely that it was written before his hostility to Christianity was evident. M. Renan says, "Il faut remarquer que, dans les *Actes*, il n'est pas encore traité en ennemi. On lui reproche seulement un sentiment bas, et on laisse croire qu'il

se repentit (viii. 24). Peut-être Simon vivait-il encore quand les lignes furent écrites, et ses rapports avec le christianisme n'étaient-ils pas encore devenus absolument mauvais."—*Les Apôtres*, p. 276. In which case the Acts must have been written earlier than A.D. 71 or 72, the date preferred by M. Renan.

tain of the friend of the Evangelist for whom both these 'treatises' were written. Internal evidence leads us, however, to infer that he was a Gentile by birth, and tradition informs us that he was a Roman resident, as it would appear, in Italy.¹ This tradition is supported by the evidence of the book itself, for St. Luke, whilst careful in referring to the geography of countries which would be but little known to a native of Italy, and as to the customs of Palestine, hastens over, as though details were unnecessary, points of Italian geography. Thus he adds that *the hour of prayer was the ninth hour*; ² that the party of the High Priest was of *the sect of the Sadducees*.³ A Jew would not have needed to be told that Gamaliel was *a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people*,⁴ nor would he have been interested in knowing that Cornelius was *a centurion of the band called the Italian band*.⁵

According to the observations which St. Luke has made for the sake of being plain and intelligible to the reader, Theophilus was certainly not a native of Palestine. In speaking of Capernaum, the writer is obliged to add for the information of his reader that it is *a city of Galilee*.⁶ He is obliged to add the same concerning Nazareth,⁷ and of Arimathea that it was *a city of the Jews*.⁸ When again he mentions the country of the Gadarenes, he is obliged to specify diffusely its situation.⁹ He describes the situation of the Mount of Olives, and its distance from Jerusalem,¹⁰ and determines by stadia the distance of the place called Emmaus from the capital.¹¹

"Theophilus was certainly also no Cretan."¹² He was not

¹ "That he was a man of rank appears from the title which St. Luke has given him: for in the Acts of the Apostles, ch. xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3; xxvi. 26, this title is applied to the Roman Governors of Judea, Felix and Festus. On the other hand, it was not confined to men of this elevated station, but was applied in the East to persons in general, whose rank and office entitled them to respect. The word was adopted in the Palmyrene Syriac, for there are three Palmyrene inscriptions, in each of which a certain Epitropus

and Ducenarius is entitled *κράτιστος*." —*J. D. Michaelis' Introduction* (edit. of Bishop Marsh), vol. iii. part 1, chap. vi. § 4.

² Acts iii. 1.

³ Acts v. 17.

⁴ Acts v. 34.

⁵ Acts x. 1.

⁶ St. Luke iv. 31.

⁷ St. Luke i. 26.

⁸ St. Luke xxiii. 51.

⁹ St. Luke viii. 26.

¹⁰ Acts i. 12.

¹¹ St. Luke xxiv. 13.

¹² Acts xxvii. 8, 12.

an Athenian, nor one living in the neighbourhood, for in that case there would be no necessity for explaining by an observation¹ the characteristic trait of this nation which Demosthenes had already delineated.² Also we cannot account him to have been a Macedonian, otherwise he had not needed to explain that Philippi was *the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony*.³

“A native of Antioch also could hardly be so ignorant of the geography of Palestine which was near that city. That he was not an Alexandrian is clear, or otherwise the Alexandrian teachers would have appropriated his reputation to their Church. Origen, when speaking of St. Luke, says only that he wrote for the heathen.”⁴

“The testimony of the Alexandrian Patriarch Eutychicus, which decides in favour of an illustrious person in Rome or Italy,⁵ is too remote from these times to be in any way decisive; there are nevertheless some grounds for it. For we see that Luke made it his business to instruct Theophilus by means of explanations respecting the places with which he thought him unacquainted. He pursues the same method in relating the voyage of the Apostle to Rome, and assists his account by descriptions.⁶ But as soon as he approaches towards Sicily and Italy,⁷ he puts down all the places as though they were known to him, e. g. Syracuse, Rhegium, Pozzuoli (on the name of which Josephus was obliged to make comments for Greek or Oriental readers), and even still less things, such as Tres Tabernæ, Via Appia,⁸ etc.” All this is consistent with the general belief that Theophilus was a native of Rome, or at least that he was a convert to Christianity living in Italy.

¹ Acts xvii. 21.

² Orat. prim. in Phil.

³ Acts xvi. 12.

⁴ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. 25.

⁵ Eutych. Orig. Eccles. Alex., edit.

Seldeni, 1642, p. 36.

⁶ Acts xxvii. 8, 12, 16.

⁷ Acts xxviii. 12, 13, 15.

⁸ Hug's Introduction to the Writings of the New Testament, vol. ii. pp. 151, 152. Eng. trans. by Wait.

SECTION IV.

PLACE FROM WHENCE WRITTEN.

GENERAL, though not uniform, tradition asserts that this book was written at Rome,¹ and what has been said in the preceding section is confirmatory of this. Characteristically of their respective prepossessions, Renan and Davidson remark, the former that the hierarchical spirit which he discerns in *the Acts* is an evidence of the truth of the tradition that it was written at Rome,² the latter that the evidence which it affords in favour of the Episcopal government of the Church is a testimony to the lateness of the book.³ In both cases the prejudice of the writer is made to serve, instead of canons of criticism, in the determination of a purely critical question. There is nothing, however, to invalidate the belief of antiquity that St. Luke wrote *the Acts of the Apostles* at Rome, and that he did so at the date already assigned, in or about the year A.D. 63.

SECTION V.

LANGUAGE IN WHICH THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

It is hardly too much to say that no doubts have ever existed that *the Acts of the Apostles* was originally written in Greek. For though the occasional Hebraisms which occur have suggested the possibility of its having been written at the first in Hebrew or in Aramaic, this supposi-

¹ Davidson's Introduction, vol. ii. p. 55.

² "Quelque indices ont porté à croire que le livre avait été composé à Rome. On dirait, en effet, que les principes de l'Eglise romaine ont pesé sur l'auteur. Cette église, des les premiers siècles,

eut le caractère politique et hiérarchique que l'a toujours distinguée. Le bon Luc put entrer dans cet esprit."—Renan, *Les Apôtres*, Introd. p. xxiii.

³ "Slight hierarchical tendencies favour a late date."—Davidson, vol. ii. p. 284.

tion has never obtained credence to any extent amongst critics.¹ St. Luke wrote at a time when Greek was the ordinary language of society, and for a people to whom it was the familiar every-day medium of communication, and in the two instances² in which Hebrew was made use of in the course of the history narrated in *the Acts*, he notes the fact as though it were something unusual.³ Even the Church at Rome was for some long time after the days of the apostles a Church in which Greek was used for the purpose of worship. St. Luke was also himself a Greek in language, if not by race; and both his Gospel and *the Acts* abound in proofs that he had an accurate knowledge of this language, and that his skill and taste in composition were considerable. Epiphanius, however, notices the existence of a Hebrew copy of *the Acts*, which was discovered in the time of Constantine the Great;⁴ it is not clear however whether this was a translation of *the Acts of the Apostles* into that language for the use of Hebrew-speaking Christians, or whether it was one of the spurious *acta* which had obtained a circulation amongst the Ebionites. Under either supposition its existence does not affect the conclusion of all critics that this book was originally written in Greek.

SECTION VI.

REASONS FOR REJECTION BY EARLY HERETICS.

WHILST *the Acts of the Apostles* was admitted into all the lists of the books of Scripture from the time of its publication, it was rejected by certain early heretics. This, however, was not because they questioned or denied its genuineness, but because its contents were opposed to one or another of their tenets. Their rejection on these grounds is

¹ Olshausen in Introduction to Acts. pels, chap. v. pp. 144—195.

² Acts xxi. 40; xxii. 2; xxvi. 14.

³ Roberts' Discussions on the Gos-

⁴ Epiphanius in Hæres. xxx. and in

Baronius Annal. Eccles. tom. iii.

therefore strongly confirmative of its genuineness, for if the book had been of recent origin, and of uncertain authorship, it would have been of no more account with them than any of the spurious Acts which have been long since forgotten. The Ebionites rejected *the Acts of the Apostles* because they held that man is only justified by the fulfilment of the law of Moses,¹ and because they opposed the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian Church, at least, except on the condition of their previous submission to the requirements of the ceremonial law.² The Marcionites rejected *the Acts* for the same reason that they mutilated the Gospel of St. Luke and the Epistles of St. Paul,³ because, like other of the Gnostic sects, they denied that the God revealed in the Old Testament was the Father of our Blessed Lord, and that the Messiah was sent by Him into the world.⁴ The Eucratites, a sect which owed its origin to Tatian, and held the views of Marcion in a somewhat modified form, and taught that it was unlawful to eat animal food, rejected the Epistles of St. Paul, without, however, challenging their genuineness, and also *the Acts of the Apostles*, because of the opposition which these books gave to their peculiar tenets;⁵ whilst the Manichæans, according to St. Augustine, rejected *the Acts* because they held that their patriarch Manes was the Comforter promised by Christ to His disciples.⁶ None of these sects, however, so far as we can gather from existing remains, or know from the treatises of Christian apologists, denied that St. Luke was the author of this book of *the Acts of the Apostles*.

¹ See Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*. Book vii. ch. 22.

² See Epiphanius, *Hæres.* xxx., and Dr. Barton's *Bampton Lectures*, Notes 80 to 84.

³ Irenæus *adv. Hæres.* lib. i. ch. 27, § 2.

⁴ "Hic homo [Marcion] volebat haberi paracletus is, quem Christus missurum promiserat apostolis. Jam Marcion vivebat sæc. ii. Igitur volebat existimari sæc. ii. demum venisse para-

cletum. At enimvero in Actis traditur jam sæculo primo, die pentecostali quinquaginta dies post Christi reditum in vitam effusum esse Spiritum Sanctum. Ergo hæc Acta debebat repudiare ne mendacii convinceretur."—*Morus in Prolegom. ad Explic. Actum Apost.*

⁵ Tertullian *cont. Marcion*, lib. 5, ch. 1. Lardner's *Hist. of Heretics*, ch. x.

⁶ Euseb. *Hist. Ecc.* lib. iv. ch. 29.

Irenæus *adv. Hæres.* lib. i. ch. 28, § 1.

⁶ August. *Epist.* cccxxvii.

SECTION VII.

UNIVERSAL RECEPTION OF 'THE ACTS' IN CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

As Eusebius informs us in his Ecclesiastical History, several of the books of the New Testament were for a time not received into the list of Holy Scriptures, nor accepted by the body of Christian writers, and several were even for a time rejected by local churches. He uses the division, which had become almost technical, into *ὁμολογουμένα* or 'recognized,' and *ἀντιλεγόμενα* or 'controverted.' The characteristic of these latter was that they were not universally received from the beginning. Thus the Alexandrian Church seems not to have received the Epistle of St. Jude among the books of the New Testament, and many of the early Latin ecclesiastical writers doubted of the authenticity of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or at least questioned its authorship and authority. The second and third Epistles of St. John were not universally received. The Epistle of St. James and the second Epistle of St. Peter were unknown to many, and the critical spirit of the ancient Church was for a time exercised in the consideration of the claims of these books to be admitted into the Sacred Canon, and hesitated, whether upon sufficient or insufficient grounds, before deciding that they were portions of the New Testament. The Apocalypse was also reckoned among the *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, or controverted. This book, however, Eusebius classifies with the *ὁμολογουμένα*, places it in this respect with the Gospels, and says, without hesitation, *καὶ δὴ τακτέον ἐν πρώτοις τὴν ἁγίαν εὐαγγελίων τετρακτὺν, οἷς ἔπεται ἡ τῶν πράξεων τῶν ἀποστόλων γραφή*.¹

No Church, then, ever rejected the book of *the Acts of the Apostles*. No Christian writer seems to have doubted of its authenticity or of its authority, and it was quoted by name as early as any other book of the New Testament by ecclesiastical writers, with unquestioning faith in its genuineness,

¹ Eusebii Pamphili Hist. Eccles. *μένων θείων γραφῶν, καὶ τῶν μὴ*
Lib. iii. c. 25. *Περὶ τῶν ὁμολογου- τοιούτων.*

and in the authenticity of the narrative which it gives of the planting of the Christian faith throughout the Roman world. According to Photius, a suggestion was made by some one that this book might have been written by Clement of Rome, whose great reputation was thrown around what was so highly esteemed. That he was ever named as its possible author is incidentally a testimony to the early date of its publication, since his death could not have been later than A.D. 97, and may have occurred as early as A.D. 68. The suggestion, however, that Clement may have been the writer of *the Acts* was not accepted by Photius as possessing any weight. The circumstance that the authorship of any book of the New Testament was discussed, and that the claim of some books was not acquiesced in without consideration, and that the author of a spurious book was, notwithstanding the innocency of his intention, degraded from the priesthood for so doing, are proofs that the books now included in the canon of Holy Scripture were not blindly received without inquiry; and a strong testimony to the genuineness and authenticity of those which we now have.¹ It is a mistake to suppose that the critical judgment is an offspring of our own days, or that we are in any way abler judges of documentary evidence than our forefathers, whilst their nearness to the source of information and their access to materials which have not been preserved to our times, undoubtedly gave them means of arriving at a decision on this point more ample than we possess.²

¹ See Tertullian adv. Marc. iv. 2, 5. Serapion apud Euseb. Hist. Ecc. vi. 12, and Euseb. Hist. Ecc. iii. 3; quoted in Westcott on History of the Canon of the New Testament, pp. 301, 342, 368.

² "The time when these facts are said to have happened, and when this history was written, was not in any of the darkest and most ignorant ages: but in an inquisitive and knowing age,

an age of great discernment and letters, when learning was now arrived at its highest pitch, and there was a free communication between most countries, a great part of the world being subject to the Roman empire, so that intelligence was easy to be had from all the cities and places herein mentioned, and the truth of things could not be concealed."—*Biscoe on the Acts of the Apostles*, chap. 1.

SECTION VIII.

‘THE ACTS’ UNIVERSALLY READ IN SERVICE OF CHURCH.

THE estimation in which the book of *the Acts of the Apostles* was held is shown in the fact that it obtained a place in all the ancient lectionaries of the Church. In the Egyptian Church on Saturdays and Sundays and during the fifty days of Pentecost two lessons were read from the New Testament, one of them being taken from *the Acts* or the Epistles and the other from the Gospels.¹ In the Apostolic Constitutions four lessons are appointed for daily use, and of these one is to be taken from *the Acts of the Apostles* or from the Epistles.² St. Basil, in one of his homilies on Baptism preached in Lent, speaks of three lessons read on that day, one of which was the first chapter of Isaiah, the second was the second chapter of *the Acts*, and the third the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew.³ In the African Church, according to St. Augustine, *the Acts of the Apostles* was read between Easter and Pentecost;⁴ and St. Chrysostom, noting this same practice, gives as the reason why this book was read at that time, and not, as would seem more natural, after the feast of Pentecost, that the works done by the Apostles and recorded in *the Acts* were done in the power of Christ’s resurrection, and were therefore appropriately read on the day following Easter Sunday.⁵ And not only was one of the lessons taken from this book at that time of the year, but sermons were directed to be preached from passages occurring in *the Acts*, for which reason St. Chrysostom was compelled to interrupt the course of his homilies on Genesis, and to turn to *the Acts* for the subjects of his sermons.⁶ The same rule, according to Cassian,⁷

¹ Cassian in de Cœnob. Institutis, lib. ii. cap. 6.

² Apostolic Constitutions, Book 2, chap. 7, § 57.

³ S. Basil, Hom. xiii. de baptismo.

⁴ S. Augustine, tract vi. in Joan.; Hom. lxxxiii. de diversis. And see

Bingham in Eccles. Antiq., Book xiv. chap. 3, § 2, 3.

⁵ S. Chrysost. Hom. lxi. cur in Pentecoste Acta leguntur.

⁶ S. Chrysost. Hom. xlvii. in Act.; Hom. xxxiii. in Genes.

⁷ Cassian in Instit. lib. ii. cap. 6.

was observed in the Church in Egypt; and we know from the *Lectioarium Gallicanum* that in the French Church during the same time of the year the two lessons were taken respectively from *the Acts of the Apostles* and from the book of the Apocalypse.¹ In the Armenian Church selections from *the Acts of the Apostles* have always been read on all days during Easter-tide, beginning at Easter Sunday with verses fifteen to twenty-six of the first chapter, until Whit Sunday, when the twenty first verses of the second chapter are read; and in the Georgian Church, not only at the same time, but on certain other Sundays and week days throughout the year. In the Apostolic Constitutions received by the Ethiopic Church the reader is directed to read daily three lessons, one from the historical books of the Old Testament, to be followed by the Psalms read antiphonally, then a second lesson from *the Acts of the Apostles* and the Epistles of St. Paul, and a third from the Gospels.² And in the Syriac Apostolic Constitutions³ the Apostles are said to enjoin that "except the Old Testament, and the Prophets, and the Gospels, and *the deeds of their own triumphs*,⁴ nothing shall be read from the pulpit of the Church." Whilst in the Coptic Church, the bishop, at the ordination of a priest, places in his hands "the Apostle," that is, the Epistles, and *the Acts of the Apostles*.⁵ In the lectionary of the Syriac Church there are sixty-nine lessons from this book which are read continuously from "the twilight of the great Sabbath of the resurrection," when the verses from the twenty-second to the thirty-sixth verse of the second chapter are read, until the tenth Sunday after Pentecost, when the concluding verses of the twenty-eighth chapter, commencing at the twenty-third verse, are ap-

¹ See Bingham, *Eccles. Antiq.*, Book xiv. chap. 3, § 2, 3.

² *Constit.* x.

³ *Anc. Syr. Docum.* p. 27.

⁴ so'done d'nitshonehun, "the deeds of their triumphs." The same word which is used in Acts xxv. 25; xxvi. 26; St. Luke xxiii. 15 = *παρρω*, *παῤῥα*, *παῤῥα*. An interesting passage; unfortunately these Syriac docu-

ments, though *ancient*, are apocryphal. Compare the Gad'la hawariyat, the Ethiopic version of a Sahidic original of the Conflicts of the Apostles; an apocryphal book of the early Eastern Church.

⁵ The usual form of printing or writing MSS. of the N. T. in the Eastern Church was, until lately, to do so in 2 vols., Vol. I. the Gospel, Vol. II. "the Apostle," i. e. Acts and Epistles.

pointed. In addition to those read in the regular course, the ancient Syriac Church selected the lectionary for the commemoration of apostles and martyrs, for the burial of the dead, and for baptism, from *the Acts of the Apostles*, the whole book being thus appropriated.¹ Amongst the Nestorians, the Karyane (or *readings*) in the Eucharistic office consists of two lessons, the first taken from the Old Testament, the latter generally from *the Acts of the Apostles*.²

The fact that this book was almost invariably read in the offices of the Church, together with selections from the Old Testament, and from the Gospels and Epistles of the New, and that no other book was generally read in these offices, is an indication of the early reception and of the value set upon it by the undivided Church; and when we remember how soon intercourse between some of the Churches which I have named grew infrequent, and at length almost ceased, how soon differences were magnified into hindrances to the intercourse of ancient days, and how not only from reverence for the ancient forms of worship, but also from controversial zeal, the several Churches clung to the rubrics and liturgical rules and customs handed down to them, it will be at once apparent that the reception of this book must have been of remote antiquity, and is an indication that its authenticity and genuineness was acknowledged long before the formal canon of Holy Scripture was settled by conciliar authority.

SECTION IX.

PASSAGE IN ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S HOMILIES CONSIDERED.

A PASSAGE in the beginning of the Homilies of St. Chrysostom on *the Acts* has led to the inference that this book

Etheridge's Syrian Churches, their early history, liturgies, and literature.

² Badger's, The Nestorians and their ritual, vol. ii. p. 19.

was but little known to the Church in his days. In his first homily on this book he says, 'To many persons this book is so little known, both it and its author, that they are not even aware that there is such a book in existence;' and again, in his homilies at Antioch (A.D. 357), *In principium Actorum*, he says, 'We are about to set before you a strange and new dish. . . Strange, I say, and not strange. Not strange, for it belongs to the order of Holy Scripture; and yet strange, because peradventure your ears are not accustomed to such a subject. Certainly there are many to whom this book is not even known, and many again think it so plain that they slight it: thus to some men their knowledge, to some their ignorance, is the cause of their neglect. . . . We are to inquire then who wrote it, and when, and on what subject; and why it is ordered to be read at this festival. For peradventure you do not hear this book read at other times, from year's end to year's end.'¹ In the same homily he goes on to say, 'It may profit us no less than even the Gospels,' therefore 'let us not hastily pass it by, but examine it closely.' Now whatever force these words may have, it must be remembered that no suggestion as to the recent origin of this book will justify the extravagant supposition that it was unknown because of the date at which it was written, or the time when it was published, indeed St. Chrysostom goes on to commend the book, and to assert that 'the author of this book is the blessed Luke, the companion of St. Paul;' and in the second cited homily he notes that it was read in the service of the Church at certain specified times of the year.

Something must be allowed to the rhetorical character of St. Chrysostom's homilies. Bearing this in mind, his words only contain a charge against his hearers and the Christians of his times, that they neglected this book, until, as a consequence, it was 'little known' to them.² The same charge might have been brought against Christians in any age of the Church since the days of St. Chrysostom, and may even be

¹ Cited in English translation, Oxford edition, of St. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts of Apostles*, Part i. p. 1, 2, note.

² "Vituperat Chrysostomus socor-

diam Christianorum, quod non legerent hunc librum, nec curarent à quo is esset scriptus."—J. G. Rosenmüller in *proleg. in Acta Apost.*

pressed with truth against many in our own times, that they 'know little' of this or that book of the Bible; little of the historical books of the Old Testament; little of *the Acts of the Apostles*, compared with what they know of the four Gospels and of the Epistles of St. Paul: little of the Epistles in comparison with their larger knowledge of the Gospels. But this little acquaintance of Christians with particular books of Holy Scripture affords no argument for the supposition that the authority of the less read books is not so great as that of those which are more frequently read, or that the date at which they were written is more recent. Books of Holy Scripture will be popular, and be read much, to the exclusion or neglect of others, just as the current of religious thought or feeling acts in one direction or another. "The experience of our own days," says a living critic, "teaches us that books of the Holy Scriptures, if not whole classes of books, may be suffered to fall into disuse from having little connection with the popular views of religion."¹ It was so according to the testimony of St. Chrysostom in his times, it will be so probably unto the end. As a fact, this book is even now less resorted to by preachers of sermons, and has given less occasion to the researches of commentators, than any other part of the New Testament.² We should, however, give to these words of St. Chrysostom a meaning which they do not, and which they could not, have been intended to bear, and which almost every page of his homilies on *the Acts* shows that they do not bear, if we distorted them into a simple assertion that the author of the book of *the Acts of the Apostles* was unknown; that the book itself was not included in the canon of Holy Scripture, until near the time when the preacher lived; that it did not make a part of the New Testament, known to the Ante-Nicene Church; was not read in the course of the services of the Church, and was not equally with every

...¹ Westcott on the Canon, &c. p. 10.

² "Ephræmius Syrus, aut qui de eo judicavit Photius, ut eruditus ita accuratus scriptor, universum Novum Fædus, εἰς τὰ λόγια Κυριακὰ quæ vocat, et τὰ ἀποστολικὰ κηρύγματα divisit. Qui,

αἵτε γραφαὶ εἰσιν αὐτῷ ἢ τε παλαιὰ διαθήκη καὶ τὰ Κυριακὰ λόγια καὶ τὰ ἀποστολικὰ κηρύγματα. Qua divisione et αἱ Ἀποστολικαὶ Πράξεις comprehenduntur."—*Dan. Heinsii Exercit. Sacræ.*

other part of the Bible within reach of all Christians. What St. Chrysostom says he speaks by way of reproach, and it would have been no cause of reproach to Christians if because this book was of recent date, or but of doubtful genuineness, or because its authenticity had been largely distrusted, it had only lately been admitted into the canon of Holy Scripture, or at least had not been so included from the first.

SECTION X.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS.

WE have seen that almost all critics, of whatever school of thought, agree in assigning the authorship of *the Acts of the Apostles* to the writer of the third Gospel; ¹ some even regarding the two treatises as parts of one book, a theory which obtains support from the words of the writer in which he calls the Gospel the *πρῶτος λόγος*, the commencement, as it were, of his task, so that when writing it he seems distinctly to have contemplated the completion of his task, the *δεύτερος λόγος* which we have in *the Acts*. This also seems likely from the fact that though in the Gospel he is circumstantial in the details of our Blessed Lord's Passion and Resurrection, yet he omits all details of His Ascension, as though he reserved these latter for the second part of his task, the book of *the Acts of the Apostles*.²

Yet though almost all critics are agreed in concluding that the writer of the third Gospel—that “according to St. Luke”—also wrote *the Acts of the Apostles*, a few modern critics, in opposition to the early and almost uniform tra-

¹ “Une chose hors de doute, c'est que les *Actes* ont eu le même auteur que le troisième Evangile et sont une continuation de cet Evangile. On ne s'arrêtera pas à prouver cette proposition laquelle n'a jamais été sérieuse-

ment contestée.”—*Renan, Les Apôtres*, p. x.

² Hug's Introduction to the writings of the New Testament, translated by Wait, vol. ii. p. 301.

ditions of the Church,¹ have attributed those books to Timothy,² to Titus, to Silas, or to some other of the companions of St. Paul, whilst Dr. Samuel Davidson, following in this respect a more advanced school of critics, questions whether it was written by an eye-witness of the events, or even by a contemporary of the Apostles, and, as I have already pointed out, arbitrarily fixes the date of its publication towards the middle of the second century, long after the death of St. Paul and the destruction of Jerusalem. The Muratorian fragment, however, was written, in the opinion of most critics, in A.D. 170.³ Irenæus, who died in 202 A.D.,⁴ Clemens of Alexandria, who flourished about 180 A.D.,⁵ and Tertullian, whose life extended from A.D. 150 to A.D. 220,⁶ attribute the Acts unhesitatingly to St. Luke, as though this were a matter of neither doubt nor cavil. Now, since these authorities are all of a date so close to the time suggested by Dr. Davidson as that of the publication of the book (A.D. 125), it is in the highest degree improbable that they could be mistaken as to the recent publication of the Acts of the Apostles, and in attributing it to St. Luke. This argument is strengthened when we regard the geographical distances at which these witnesses lived—Syria, Egypt, Carthage, and Gaul.

That the book was written by a companion of St. Paul is clearly shown in the use of the pronoun *we* (Acts xvi. 10); whilst the way in which he distinguishes between the facts of which he was an eye-witness and those which he relates on the authority of St. Paul himself, or of some one of his attendants, marks the scrupulous care of the writer to make his narrative a truthful record of the progress of the Church within the limits of St. Paul's mission.⁷ To this

¹ Photius mentions that some doubted whether it were written by Clemens Romanus, Barnabas, or St. Luke.

² This is the conjecture of Mayerhoff.

³ "Acta autem omnium apostolorum sub uno libro scripta sunt lucas obtime theofile comprindit."

⁴ Adv. Hæres. iii. 14, 1.

⁵ Stromata, lib. v. cap. 12. In his Hypotyposes, or Outlines, now lost,

Clemens argued that the Epistle to the Hebrews was translated by St. Luke from the original Hebrew of St. Paul, and that the resemblance between the style of the Acts and of the Hebrews arose from the fact that St. Luke wrote the one, and was the translator of the other. See Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. vi. 14.

⁶ De Jejuniis, cap. x.

⁷ "En attribuant les *Actes* à un com-

Baur replies,¹ that the writer wishes to pass himself off as an eye-witness of the events which he records, and that he has imitated very successfully the style of St. Luke. This, however, is an assertion destitute of all support from the book itself, and is contrary to all probability, since, if the writer had wished his history to be accepted as the genuine writing of St. Luke, he would have bestowed some care in indicating the authorship, either by expressly naming the writer, or by compelling the reader to conclude that it was his. St. Luke, however, is nowhere named in *the Acts of the Apostles*,² nor is it anywhere stated that it was written by a companion of St. Paul, though it is clear from the composition of the book itself that it was written by some one placed in the position which from other evidence we know that St. Luke held with reference to the Apostle.³ It may be well then to examine the testimony which we have in support of the tradition of the Church that it was written by St. Luke.

1. It is clear whoever the writer was that he must have accompanied St. Paul in his voyage from Cæsarea to Rome, and that he remained with the Apostle during his im-

pagnon de Paul, on explique deux particularités importantes; d'une part, la disproportion des parties de l'ouvrage, dont plus de trois cinquièmes sont consacrés à Paul; de l'autre, la disproportion que se remarque dans la biographie même de Paul, dont la première mission est exposée avec une grande brièveté, tandis que certaines parties de la deuxième et de la troisième mission, surtout les derniers voyages, sont racontés avec de minutieux détails. Un homme tout à fait étranger à l'histoire apostolique n'aurait pas eu de ces inégalités. L'ensemble de son ouvrage eût été mieux conçu. Ce qui distingue l'histoire composée d'après des documents de l'histoire écrite en tout ou en partie d'original, c'est justement la disproportion: l'historien de cabinet prenant pour cadre de son récit les événements eux-mêmes, l'auteur de mémoires prenant pour cadre ses souvenirs ou du moins ses relations personnelles. Un historien ecclésiastique, une sorte

d'Eusèbe, écrivant vers l'an 120, nous eût légué un livre tout autrement distribué à partir du chapitre xiii. La façon bizarre dont les *Actes*, à ce moment, sortent de l'orbite où ils tournaient jusque-là, ne s'explique, selon moi, que par la situation particulière de l'auteur et ses rapports avec Paul."—Renan, *Les Apôtres*, Introd. pp. xv. xvi.

¹ *Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi*.—Stuttgart, 1845.

² "That the author never names himself either as the author, or otherwise, can of itself not be urged as an objection to any hypothesis of authorship, unless by the occurrence of some mention, from which the authorship by another may be fairly inferred. But if we have in this book no mention of Luke, we have certainly no hint of any other person having furnished the narrative."—*Alford in Proleg. to Acts*.

³ See previous note from Renan's *Les Apôtres*.

prisonment in that city. Now, there are three letters written from Rome by St. Paul, to the Churches of Ephesus, of Colosse, of Philippi, and also another to Philemon, in which he makes mention of Tychicus,¹ Timothy,² Epaphroditus,³ Aristarchus,⁴ Onesimus,⁵ Marcus,⁶ Jesus Justus,⁷ Epaphras,⁸ Luke,⁹ and Demas,¹⁰ as being at one time or another with him at Rome. Now of these, Onesimus fled from his master, came to the Apostle, and was converted whilst St. Paul was at Rome; Epaphroditus was sent from Philippi by the Church in that city after St. Paul had reached Rome, and could not therefore have been the companion of his voyage, which the writer of the Acts evidently was; Timothy, Tychicus, and Aristarchus accompanied St. Paul in his voyage to Greece,¹¹ and joined him at Rome after the beginning of his imprisonment, and therefore could not have detailed as an eye-witness¹² the incidents of the voyage from Cæsarea to Malta. Besides this, Aristarchus, Timothy, and Tychicus are named among those who had gone before and “waited for us,” i. e. St. Paul and the writer, “at Troas.” Aristarchus, Marcus, and Justus, again, “were of the circumcision,”¹³ and the *Acts of the Apostles* contain many indications that the writer was a Greek by birth, and a proselyte to Judaism by religion; so that these are excluded from the list of possible writers. Epaphras was a member and minister of the Colossian Church, who, it seems most probable, had come to Rome with tidings from that Church to the Apostle, and had there become the *fellow-prisoner* of St. Paul, but was not a companion of the Apostle during his voyage to Malta and Rome.¹⁴ Of Demas we read that in the afflictions of St. Paul he forsook him through love of this world,¹⁵ whereas it

¹ Ephes. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. iii. 12; Acts xx. 4.

² Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1.

³ Phil. ii. 25; iv. 18.

⁴ Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24; Acts xix. 29; xx. 4; xxvii. 2.

⁵ Col. iv. 9; Philem. 10.

⁶ Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24; Acts xv. 37.

⁷ Col. iv. 11.

⁸ Col. i. 7; iv. 12; Philem. 23.

⁹ Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

¹⁰ Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 10; Philem. 24.

¹¹ Acts xx. 4, 5.

¹² Acts xvii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 18, 19, 20, 27, 29, 37; xxviii. 2, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

¹³ Col. iv. 10, 11.

¹⁴ Col. i. 8; iv. 12; Philem. 23.

¹⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 10.

is clear that the writer of *the Acts of the Apostles* was the constant companion of St. Paul. So that of all those who at one time or another were the fellow-labourers and companions of St. Paul, Luke alone fulfils the three conditions which meet in the writer of this book: That he should have been the companion of St. Paul in his voyage to Rome; that he should have been with him at the time he wrote his Epistle from Rome; ¹ and that he should be a Greek proselyte to Judaism, and not a Jew by birth.²

2. As to the supposition, perfectly gratuitous, and one which has no support from evidence external or internal, that Silas, Timothy, or Titus might any one of them have been the writer of the book, it would be sufficient to point to the utter absence of any evidence in its favour; but in the case of Silas and Timothy, this supposition is incompatible with what we know incidentally from references in the book itself, since both these were absent from St. Paul at a time when the writer of *the Acts* was present,³ and when Timothy joined St. Paul the writer of this book was already with him.⁴ Moreover, had Silas been the writer, he would hardly have introduced his name as being that of "a chief man among the brethren."⁵ The very fact, again, that *the Acts of the Apostles* was from the first attributed to St. Luke, whose name is less distinguished than some of these other companions of St. Paul, can only be accounted for by the circumstance of his really being the writer. Had the author not been known, and had there been any desire to supply a name, the history would have been attributed to the best known and most distinguished of the companions of St. Paul—to Timothy, to Titus, or to Silas; and, in fact, this is what some modern critics have done, from the supposition, natural enough, that the most intimate companion of St. Paul would be the one who was best known among his fellow-labourers, and that he would be the writer of the book in which was narrated the history of the

¹ The Epistle to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians.

² Birk's *Horæ Apostolicæ*, pp. 351—353.

³ Acts xvii. 15, 16.

⁴ Acts xx. 4, 5.

⁵ Acts xv. 22.

actions of the Apostles ; so that it is clear that this book was not attributed to St. Luke from any idea that the authority of the writing in question was increased by attributing it to a distinguished disciple.¹ Internal evidence, then, and the absence of any likelihood of the book having been written by a better-known person than St. Luke, comes in support of the positive testimony of men living sufficiently near to Apostolic times to be competent witnesses in this matter, and adds weight to the almost uniform tradition of the Church and the positive language of Councils.² And this testimony of antiquity and of early Councils is incidental rather than formal and direct, as though no question had arisen in those times as to the authorship of this book, and as though no argument was needed for its support. Bleek, whose prepossessions do not incline him to support the claims of the Evangelist to be the author of the book of *the Acts of the Apostles*, yet says, " That the writer was Luke, the friend of Paul, rests as to both the Acts and the Gospel of St. Luke on ecclesiastical tradition, which we have no just grounds to doubt. It is true Luke is not mentioned as the author

¹ If the authenticity of the second Epistle to St. Timothy is denied, this strengthens, rather than weakens, the claim of St. Luke, and Renan thus states this argument from probability : " Les épîtres aux Colossiens et à Philémon, quoique très probablement authentiques, ne sont pourtant pas les épîtres les plus indubitables de Saint Paul. Mais ces écrits sont, en tout cas du premier siècle, et cela suffit pour prouver invinciblement que, parmi les disciples de Paul, il exista un Lucas. Le fabricant des épîtres à Timothée, en effet, n'est sûrement pas le même que le fabricant des épîtres aux Colossiens et à Philémon (en supposant, contrairement à notre opinion, que celles-ci soient apocryphes). Admettre qu'un faussaire eût attribué à Paul un compagnon imaginaire serait déjà peu vraisemblable. Mais sûrement des faussaires différents ne seraient pas tombés d'accord sur le même nom. Deux observations donnent à ce raisonnement une force par-

ticulière. La première, c'est que le nom de Lucas ou Lucanus est un nom rare parmi les premiers chrétiens, te qui ne prête pas à des confusions d'homonymes ; la seconde, c'est que le Lucas des épîtres n'est d'ailleurs aucune célébrité. Inscrire un nom célèbre en tête d'un écrit, n'avait rien qui répugnât aux habitudes du temps. Mais inscrire en tête d'un écrit un faux nom, obscur d'ailleurs, c'est ce qui ne se conçoit plus. L'intention du faussaire était-elle de couvrir le livre de l'autorité de Paul ? Mais, alors, pourquoi ne prenait-il pas le nom de Paul lui-même, ou du moins le nom de Timothée ou de Tite, disciples bien plus connus de l'apôtre des gentiles ? Luc n'avait aucune place dans la tradition, dans la légende, dans l'histoire . . . Nous pensons donc que l'auteur du troisième Evangile et des Actes est bien réellement Luc, disciple de Paul." — *Les Apôtres*, pp. xvi—xviii.

² e. g. Laodicea, A.D. 363. Third of Carthage, A.D. 397.

till towards the close of the second century, first by Irenæus, and then by Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and others ;¹ but, then, these writers state the fact so unhesitatingly, not even stopping to discuss it, that it is quite clear they must have known it to be universally acknowledged by the Church in their day, and derived from a still older ecclesiastical tradition. No doubt from the very first, ever since the work had come before the general public, this has been the common opinion of the Church ; and to it we owe the statement of the superscription in each case as to the author, which we find universally in the MSS. of the Gospel, and to some extent in those of the Acts, and even in the oldest traditions.”²

SECTION XI.

ST. LUKE.

THE name of St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul and the writer of *the Acts of the Apostles*, was thought by Basnage, Lardner, Heumann, and Wetstein, to be the same as Lucius who is mentioned in Romans xvi. 21, and in Acts xiii. 1. This supposition, however, is now generally rejected, and it has been refuted by Michaelis.³ Lucas—Λουκάς—is the contracted form of Lucanus—Λουκανός—not of Lucius ; in this it follows the usual rule of contractions, as Silas from Silvanus, Κλεόπας from Κλεόπατρος, Ἀντίπας from Ἀντίπατρος, Καρποκράς from Καρποκράτης.⁴ In several MSS. the Gospel according to St. Luke is called *Evangelium secundum Lucanum* ;⁵ and Lucretius uses Lucas for Lucanus.⁶

¹ See Irenæus, Hær. iii. 14, 15 ; Clemens Alex., Adumbrat in 1 Pet. Ep. ; and Stromata, lib. v. p. 588 B., ed. Sylburg ; Tertullian, de Jej. x.

² Bleek's Introduction to the New Testament, vol. i. p. 368—9. Eng. trans.

³ J. D. Michaelis' Introduction to the New Testament by Marsh, vol. iii.

part I, chap. 6, § 3. Gasp. Sanchez in the introduction to his commentary on the Acts supports the view of Wetstein.

⁴ Mill on the Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels, notes, p. 228 (2nd edit.).

⁵ Mabillon in Mus. Ital. i. 3.

⁶ Lucæ boves=Lucanæ. De Nat. Rerum, v. 1301.

Though the name of St. Luke is not a sufficient indication that he was of Greek parentage, since it was not unusual for Jews to bear Greek and Roman names, yet he is enumerated by St. Paul among those who were not of the circumcision.¹ Many circumstances, each small in itself, but the whole weighty as accumulative proof, add support to this. He was evidently acquainted with classical literature. Both his books, that of the Gospel and this of *the Acts*, written as they both were for a Roman of distinction, commence, in accordance with classical models, with a Proœmium, and not after the manner of Hebrew writers.² Again, it has been noted that in calling the people of Malta “barbarians,” he does not mean uncivilized, but makes use of a term which the Greeks used of all who did not speak the Greek language,³ and one which the Romans applied to all people who were not citizens of Rome, and even to the Greeks themselves. Thus Juvenal, speaking of Herod Agrippa, calls him a barbarian.⁴ The Greek of the Gospel of St. Luke and that of the Acts of the Apostles is considered by critics purer than that written either by St. Matthew or St. Mark, and freer from Hebrew idioms, and Dr. Davidson considers that his Gospel shows that he was “a critical historian.”⁵ This is an indication, it may be, of the superior education and position of St. Luke;⁶ or, according to some critics, it is thought to betray his connection with a part of the empire in which the written Greek was purer than in most parts of Asia. Be this as it may, the fact that the Greek which St. Luke wrote was better than that employed by the Hebrew writers, St. Matthew and St. Mark,⁷ adds some confirmation to the

¹ Col. iv. 14.

² Hug’s *Introd.* *Alford*, in speaking of the proœmium to the Gospel of St. Luke, says, “The peculiar style of the preface—which is purer Greek than the contents of the Gospel, and also more laboured and formal—may be accounted for, partly because it is the composition of the Evangelist himself, and not translated from Hebrew sources like the rest, and partly because prefaces,

especially when also dedicatory, are usually in a rounded and artificial style.”

³ Strabo, lib. xiv.

⁴ “ . . . Hunc dedit olim Barbarus incestæ dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.”—Sat. vi. 156-7.

⁵ Davidson’s *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 4.

⁶ Humphrey on the Acts.

⁷ “The diction of the Evangelist is

uniform tradition of the Church, and lends incidental testimony to the truth of the inference from St. Paul's words that he was a Grecian, a proselyte, and not born a Jew.

According to an early tradition, St. Luke was one of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ,¹ and this tradition receives some support from the circumstance that he alone of the four Evangelists has mentioned the sending forth of the seventy, and has carefully recorded the account of their mission and return, and has preserved the instructions which were given to them by our Lord;² as though he felt moved to do so from the fact of his participation in their work. Nor is this tradition invalidated, as some have supposed, from the assertion of the Evangelist in the opening words of his Gospel, in which he seems to distinguish between himself and those who were eye-witnesses of all which Christ had done.³ The emphasis is on ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, and he cites the testimony of those who were ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται, not merely eye-witnesses, but "eye-witnesses from the beginning;" those who had witnessed the marvels which attended His birth and youth, and the very beginnings of His earthly ministry. So that there is nothing in these words which would prevent our believing that the old tradition, that he was one of the seventy disciples, may probably have some foundation in fact.

St. Paul speaks of Luke as "the beloved physician,"⁴ and there are sufficient indications both in the Gospels and also in *the Acts of the Apostles*, from the way in which he notes diseases and their cure, that the writer possessed an accurate knowledge of medicine.⁵ He describes more minutely than the other Evangelists, physical ailments, and in doing so he

purser and less Hebraic than that of the other Synoptists." "Luke's diction is comparatively easy and correct." *Davidson*, ii. pp. 56—67. See also Hug's Introduction, vol. ii. p. 169. Eng. transl. Marsh Michaelis, vol. iii. part I. p. 332.

¹ Origen, *Dialog. contra Marcion*, Sect. 1, p. 8, edit. Wetstein (op. tom. 1,

p. 806, edit. De la Rue). Epiphanius, *adv. Hæres. lib. 1*, § 12. Theophylact, *Proem. in Comment. in Evang. Luc.*

² Luke x. 1—25. ³ Luke i. 2.

⁴ Col. iv. 14.

⁵ "Lucas, medicus Antiochensis, ut ejus scripta indicant."—*S. Hierom. de Script. Eccles.*

uses precise and technical words. In the Gospel, in his expression *a great fever*,¹ πυρετῷ μεγάλῳ, St. Luke makes use of the same expression which Galen, who lived shortly after his time, employs.² His word denoting *blindness*, ἀχλὺς,³ is also used in a similar way by some of the old medical writers. There is, again, a correctness and precision indicative of one versed in surgical knowledge in his account of the healing of the lame man by Peter and John, *his feet and ankle bones (tibia and fibula) received strength*, παραχρῆμα δὲ ἐστερεώθησαν, αὐτοῦ αἱ βάσεις καὶ τὰ σφυρά.⁴ Note also the technical accuracy of his account of the illness of Publius in chap. xxviii. 8. πυρετοῖς καὶ δυσεντερίᾳ συνεχόμενον κατακεῖσθαι. This characteristic of St. Luke is so constant that we are justified in observing that "St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John wrote of diseases from a popular or common-sense point of view, while St. Luke largely uses the technical language of a physician."⁵ The value of the medical experience of St. Luke was shown in this, that it "enabled him both to form a proper judgment of the miraculous cures which were performed by St. Paul, and to give an accurate and authentic detail of them."⁶

A comparison of the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles with two passages in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians shows us that St. Luke joined St. Paul at a time when the Apostle was weighed down by sickness. If we turn to the Epistle, we find St. Paul saying, "When I came to Troas . . . *I had no rest in my spirit* because I found not Titus my brother; but, taking my leave of them, I went into Macedonia."⁷ And again, "When we were come into Macedonia *our flesh had no rest*. . . Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus."⁸ These words indicate mental and bodily suffering; so that when on turning to *the Acts* we read that they, i. e. St. Paul and St. Timothy, "came down to

¹ Luke iv. 38.

² Thus Galen divides fevers into τὸν μέγαν τε καὶ μικρὸν πυρετόν, *de differenti.* Febr. 1. Quoted by Wetstein.

³ Acts xiii. 11. ⁴ Acts iii. 7.

⁵ Dr. Belcher on Our Lord's Miracles

of Healing, p. 167.

⁶ J. D. Michaelis' Introduction to the New Testament, edit. by Marsh, vol. iii. part 1, p. 327 (ed. 1823).

⁷ 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

⁸ 2 Cor. vii. 5, 6; compare with i. 4.

Troas," and then directly after we read for the first time of the presence of the writer, "immediately *we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia,"¹ we cannot help remembering that St. Luke who now joined St. Paul was "the beloved physician."²

As to the birthplace of St Luke, Holy Scripture gives us nowhere any indications. Ecclesiastical writers, however, tell us that he was born in, or at least belonged to a family settled in, the Syrian Antioch. This is the testimony of Eusebius,³ and St. Jerome adopts the same statement.⁴ Greswell, however, and other modern writers assign to Philippi the honour of being his birthplace, which opinion is accepted by Renan.⁵ Others consider that the Alexandrian Troas may have been his birthplace. Hug notes that "he could not want opportunities to perfect himself in a knowledge of medicine in a scientific city like Antioch;"⁶ and Renan, that he might have acquired his nautical knowledge at Philippi, or its port, Neapolis. All this, however, is pure conjecture. Sacred history is silent, and Eusebius did not live sufficiently near the time of the Apostle to be altogether an unexceptionable witness, though he reports the traditions of earlier times, and such as he deemed trustworthy. St. Luke, indeed, may not improbably, according to Eusebius, have been born at Antioch, and may have taken up his residence in after life at Philippi.⁷ As to the first-named city, it may be noted that Josephus tells us that in Antioch at this time were many proselytes from heathenism to Judaism.⁸

¹ Acts xvi. 8—10. ² Col. iv. 14.

³ "Δουκᾶς δὲ τὸ μὲν γένος ὦν τῶν ἀπ' Ἀντιοχείας."—Eccles. Hist. Lib. iii. c. 4.

⁴ de Scriptor. Eccles.; sub voce Lucas.

⁵ "On ne doute plus que le narrateur n'ait été un Macédonien, ou plutôt un Philippien." "Les remarquables connaissances nautiques de l'auteur des Actes (voir surtout ch. xxvii., xxviii.) feraient croire qu'il était de Néapolis le port de Philippes."—*Les Apôtres*, *Introd.* p. xviii.

⁶ Hug's Introduction to New Testa-

ment, vol. ii. p. 147. *Eng. transl.*

⁷ "The companion of Paul who writes in Acts xvi. and xx. in the first person, must have parted from Paul in Philippi; for in ver. 19 the "we" ceases, and the names Paul and Silas are introduced. . . . It is not till Paul reaches Philippi again on his next journey, that Luke re-appears, and the first person plural is used once more ch. xx. 5, 6). It would appear, therefore, as if Philippi had been Luke's home."

⁸ Contra Apion, lib. ii. § 10.

Among the Syriac manuscripts in the British Museum are "documents concerning Edessa," which, it is believed, were made use of by Eusebius in the preparation of his Ecclesiastical history. In these documents, which are older, at least, than the Nicene Council, we are told that "Byzantium, and all the country of Thrace, and of the parts about it, as far as the great river [Danube], the boundary which separates it from the barbarians, received the Apostle's ordination to the priesthood from Luke the Apostle, who himself built a Church there, and ministered there in his office of ruler and guide which he held there. . .

"Luke, moreover, the Evangelist, had such diligence that he wrote the exploits of the Acts of the Apostles, and the ordinances and laws of the ministry of their priesthood, and whither each one of them went. By his diligence, I say, did Luke write these things, and more than these; and he placed them in the hands of Priscilla and Aquila, his disciples; and they accompanied him up to the day of his death, just as Timothy and Erastus of Lystra, and Menæus,¹ the first disciples of the Apostle, accompanied Paul until he was taken up to the city of Rome, because he had withstood Tertullus the orator."²

¹ Probably Manaen. See Acts xiii. 1. first three centuries. Edinburgh, Clark,

² Syriac documents attributed to the 1871.

CHAPTER II.

OBJECTION TO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ACTS.

WE have seen, then, that the external evidence in favour of the genuineness of *the Acts of the Apostles*, and of the authenticity of the statements contained in it, is unassailable, or at least that it has not been seriously assailed.¹

Though not quoted by name until about A.D. 170, this book shares this disadvantage with the four Gospels. It was not indeed the custom of Ecclesiastical writers to cite the name of the book of Holy Scripture which they quoted. The attempts of heathen persecutors to destroy the copies of all such writings may have been the reason why these writers were thus silent. The desire to preserve the books of the New Testament from destruction led necessarily to this habit of quoting them *memoriter*, and this renders it oftentimes difficult to determine with certainty whether passages in the early Fathers are taken from the sacred writings or not. So that, though no reasonable doubt can exist that they are quoting directly from the books of the New Testament, it is not always easy to prove that they are so doing. What is certain is, that at the date of 170 A.D., the book of the Acts of the Apostles was contained in every known list of the books of Holy Scripture, and that at and from this date it was quoted by name as an inspired book and the production of St. Luke, and that no doubt was ever expressed in those times as to its genuineness.

¹ "The authorship has been generally ascribed to Luke the Evangelist, not merely because the third Gospel has been assigned to him, but because all external evidence is to that effect."—Dr. Davidson, vol. ii. p. 269.

Long before this date, however, the Gospel according to St. Luke is known to have existed, and the whole internal evidence is in favour of *the Acts of the Apostles* having been written by the same hand as that which penned the Gospel. This, indeed, has never been seriously impugned by sceptics.¹ These books were both of them translated and circulated at least in three different versions, that of the Syriac, the old Italic, and the Coptic; and these, according to the decision of competent critics, forming their judgment by the acknowledged rules of criticism, were made the latest of them in the second century; and Church historians, whose knowledge on such a subject cannot be questioned, tell us that *the Acts* was written many years before that time, and by the Evangelist St. Luke. This direct testimony is, as we have seen, rendered highly probable from the publication at the close of the first and at the beginning of the second century of various *Acta*, named and modelled after *the Acts of the Apostles*, and referring to, and professing, whether with truth or not, to fill up the outline of events of which the only record we possess is that contained in the genuine book.² The external evidence is thus wholly in favour of the genuineness and authenticity of this book. This has never been denied. But this is only half the testimony in behalf of this book. The internal evidence is as complete as the external.

Internal evidence in favour of the credibility of an historical document consists in part, at least, in the agreement of such document with the acknowledged facts of contemporary history, and the consistency of new facts one with another. Its genuineness depends upon the accord of the facts related and the sentiments expressed with the known character of the writer. If names and incidents are mentioned, the internal evidence is stronger or weaker in proportion to their accord with other trustworthy documents. And in proportion to the minuteness of this agreement, we place a greater or less amount of reliance on the authenti-

¹ Que les *Actes* ont eu le même auteur que le troisième Evangile . . n'a jamais été sérieusement contesté."—

Renan, *Les Apôtres*, p. x.

² See Section 1.

city of the document under examination. There may indeed be an absence of all cotemporary documents, or of other histories, with which to compare the new document or history. And though the truth of the new document thus standing alone is not invalidated by the absence of all means by which we may test its accuracy, yet it will be deprived of the evidence by which its accuracy may be so attested, and by which we may be certified of its authenticity. This, however, is not the case with reference to *the Acts of the Apostles*. Personal and geographical names abound throughout this book. The individuals named, especially those incidentally named, are known to us from the writings of secular historians, from the existence of medals and coins, as well as of inscriptions. Minute topographical details occur which prove the acquaintance of the writer with the places which he mentions, and these have in several instances been verified for the first time by the researches of recent travellers.¹ The historical facts to which references are made are noticed with accuracy. This book fulfils every test to which it can be subjected in this respect, and if only canons of criticism were to be considered, there would be no hesitation in acknowledging the authenticity of this history of the first propagation of the truth in Jerusalem, Judæa, Samaria, and in the remaining provinces of the Roman world.

It is evident that a book which stands this test, and of which the accuracy as to events recorded in independent documents cannot be impugned, has a claim to have its credibility acknowledged as to the new facts related which cannot be verified by comparison with other authorities. If a book be rigidly accurate in all the details contained in it so far as we can subject them to a comparison with other books, we are called upon to respect and to accept its accuracy in those details which cannot be so tested: a witness generally credible may be relied on in things about which we cannot test his credibility, unless there be special reasons for distrusting his evidence in one direction, whilst

¹ See the *Voyages and Shipwrecks* and notes at end of Introduction to of St. Paul by James Smith, 2nd edit., *Acts* in Alford's Commentary.

accepting it in others; and unless this ground for distrust can be shown to exist in the case of this writer, then his general trustworthiness is a guarantee of the truth of all he relates. This is often forgotten by some biblical critics, who, receiving the statements of Holy Scripture which are confirmed by secular monuments or by the writings of antiquity, and being compelled to acknowledge their accordance with the testimony of such evidences, yet hesitate to accept, and even deny, the facts which are only known to them from the pages of these Scriptures, and this though the discoveries made from day to day are narrowing the number of those unsupported facts, and extorting an acknowledgment from hostile witnesses of the wonderful literal accuracy of Holy Scripture. It is however clear, that when we can test the truth of a record in a large number of particulars, it is reasonable that we should extend our confidence and accept as truth the smaller number of unconfirmed facts. Putting then aside all question of the inspiration and the divine character of the book of *the Acts of the Apostles*, and treating it merely as the writing of a man living at the time when the events which he relates occurred, and having opportunity of knowing the truth of what he records, its conformity with the notices of the same events which are preserved in the pages of such historians as Suetonius and Tacitus and Josephus, with the inscriptions and coins yet remaining to us, and with the geographical and other features of nature, is so striking as to call upon us to rely upon the fidelity of the narrative in the few particulars about which we as yet have not the same additional testimony.

Another kind of internal evidence arises out of what has been called the "undesigned coincidences" between the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul. With this kind of testimony the reader is no doubt familiar from the pages of Biscoe and Paley.¹ The latter has placed these coincidences in so clear a light, and has stated with such fairness the value of the evidence which they afford, and has done so at the same time with such brevity, that it

¹ The History of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, by Richard Biscoe. The Boyle Lectures, 1736—38. London, 1742. Oxford, 1829.—Horæ Paulinæ, by William Paley, fourth edition, London, 1805.

would be vain to expect that a successor in this field will add to the clearness of Paley's statements, or can state the case with greater moderation than he has done, whilst he would almost certainly not be equally concise.¹ In place then of attempting to restate the argument, or to traverse the same field, I refer the reader to the writer last cited. Dr. Davidson indeed admits, that since "Paley explored this field, many believe that he set the whole argument in its clearest light and vindicated the credibility of both, by showing that the writer of the history did not copy from the author of the Epistles, or *vice versa*, but that the coincidences are *undesigned*." Such evidence however, he goes on to say, "has not appeared satisfactory to all," though he does not assign any grounds for such dissatisfaction, but adds, "we shall examine it under the following heads:

"(1) The general conduct and teaching of the Apostle Paul as set forth in the work.

(2) Various particulars in the book disagreeing with other writings.

(3) The nature and form of the speeches interspersed.

(4) The historical narratives."²

Now of these four classes of objections one only can be used to invalidate the argument in favour of the authenticity of this book arising out of the undesigned coincidences. If indeed there were in *the Acts of the Apostles* "various particulars. . disagreeing with other writings," by which Dr. Davidson seems to mean "other writings" in the canon of Holy Scripture, this would be indeed an objection of great weight, and one which ought to be fairly and fully considered.

Having given the four heads under which are arranged all objections used by him, Dr. Davidson proceeds to state these objections in detail. These I shall endeavour to examine as briefly as the nature of the case admits. Before doing so, however, it is right to say that these objections are only selected by Dr. Davidson from the writings of modern critics, almost all of the German school, and that he has

¹ To these may be added some few instances which are pointed out in Professor J. J. Blunt's volume on the *Veracity of the Gospels*, and others in

Mr. George Rawlinson's *Bampton Lectures*.

² Davidson's *Introduction*, vol. ii. p. 207.

merely reiterated and supported them by remarks of his own. By so doing, however, he has assumed the responsibility of these various objections, and by the earnestness and ability with which he urges them, he evidently is willing to accept this responsibility. His work, then, I assume gives us in a convenient form all the objections which he thinks can be urged, and they are stated in as clear and forcible a manner as an advocate conversant with the subject can state them. Candour requires that I should say that the objections appear to me destitute of any weight whatever, and that most of them may be answered by any one moderately acquainted with Holy Scripture and able to compare passage with passage. At the same time I feel that this may be because I naturally consider them from the point of view of one who believes in the inspiration of Holy Scripture, though I am willing to examine the subject without reference to this consideration. As, however, the objections are stated by a writer of the information and familiarity with the subject which Dr. Davidson possesses, it must needs be that these objections—feeble as they often seem to be—have a weight and exercise an influence upon minds entitled to be respected, and may influence the practical conclusion of men in so serious a question as that of the genuineness and authenticity of the scripture of the New Testament. That I may not seem to deal unfairly, I shall state all the objections, and give them, so far as space will allow, in the words of Dr. Davidson, or, when I quote from others, in the words of the writer cited. If in doing so I am unavoidably tedious, I trust that the necessity of not passing over any objection will be deemed a sufficient apology, since the conclusions from the particular objections which Dr. Davidson names are these—

(1) That the book of *the Acts of the Apostles* was not written by St. Luke.

(2) That it was not published until the second century.

(3) That it is untrustworthy in all its historical details.

(4) That it was written for the purpose of exalting St. Paul, and if not of disparaging St. Peter, yet of placing the first-named Apostle above him ; and that this is so apparent

that the writer, because his purpose is evident, has failed in attaining his object.

The first objection taken by Dr. Davidson to the authority of this book arises out of the silence of the writer in regard to many incidents, especially of several in the life of St. Paul; he finds there notices of "repeated journeys which the Apostle made" to Jerusalem, some of which are satisfactorily explained, others not,¹ and he thinks the writer ought to have given particulars and explanations of these journeys. Later on he is perplexed with other omissions, and these add to his want of faith in this book.

But is this really a valid objection to the genuineness of any book?

Objections arising out of the absence of details which it is thought ought to be found in a book, can only be fairly urged by those who have considered the scope of the book, and possess some insight into the intentions of the writer. The absence, again, should be very marked and such as would strike every reader, since the studies, the feelings, or the prepossessions of a reader, apart from any mistake on his side as to the object of the book, will lead him oftentimes to desire fuller details or confirmation on points which it may be wholly beside the object of the book to supply. Nor is such silence, even when marked, thought any argument against the authenticity of a book, though it may be as to the competency or judgment of the writer. If then the reader should decide in his own mind that the biographer of the Apostles might have supplied information which is wanting in the book of *the Acts of the Apostles*, this in no wise impeaches the accuracy of what is given there. Granting that there may be omissions, and that we are made aware of this fact by the various Epistles of St. Paul, yet, it may be noted, there is a certain critical value in the very omissions which we regret. Had the writer of *the Acts* sought to make his history credible, he would have wrought out some of the omitted incidents, and stated in greater detail what he

¹ Davidson's Introduction, vol. ii. p. 207.

has given so concisely. If he had endeavoured to make a fictitious history pass as genuine, he would have been careful to make it accord with the hints and suggestions in the Epistles. On the other hand, the writer of the Epistles has been equally indifferent to the same consideration, and has noticed incidents of which there is hardly a hint in *the Acts of the Apostles*; yet under any hypothesis one of these books must have been written before the other. Whilst, then, we may regret the absence of information which we had hoped to have found in *the Acts*, one thing is clear, that there has been no attempt to make the two, the history and the Epistles, agree one with the other, so that every coincidence of expression and of narration when met with is all the more valuable because of its being manifestly undesigned. But is there any reason why we should expect to find in *the Acts* the details which Dr. Davidson misses? If the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles had been a biography of St. Peter and St. Paul, we might fairly have expected that many incidents omitted from the history would have been preserved in the biography. Then we might have been told when and where St. Peter was born, the station of his father, the time of his marriage, the number of his children, the period of his death, and many other facts which we naturally look for in a biography, especially in one written by a cotemporary and a companion. So again of St. Paul, we are not told why he desired to go up to Jerusalem when his work might seem to have demanded his presence at Ephesus, save his natural desire as a Jew to be present at the great feast in the temple. Again, we learn nothing of his birth and parentage, only the most meagre hints as to his education, nothing of his death; so that it is true, as the critic says, that some things "are satisfactorily explained, others not." Before, however, we censure such omission, we must be satisfied that the book of *the Acts of the Apostles* is a book of biography. This it clearly is not. The lives of the Apostles are not recorded, but *the acts* of the Apostles, and those acts only so far as they relate to the manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost as shown in

the expansion of the Church of Christ. The reason why St. Paul "would not consent to stay at Ephesus"¹ at one time, and why he "abandoned the field of his operations at Ephesus"² at another time, may then probably have been omitted because these facts in no ways tended to the object which St. Luke keeps steadily in view, the triumph of the Church over the persecutions of its enemies, the accomplishment of the promise of Christ that "the gates of hell should not prevail against it,"³ and the rapid growth and extension of the Church during the years immediately following the ascension of our Lord into heaven.

The next objection of Dr. Davidson is, that "the general conduct and teaching of St. Paul, as set forth in the work, is inconsistent with the whole tone of his Epistles, and with the fact that St. Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles." In opposition to this fact the writer of *the Acts* represents him as having preached continually in the synagogues of the Jews; and while in his Epistles St. Paul deprecates the observance of Jewish ceremonies, *the Acts* represents him as careful of the observance of the rules of the Mosaic law.

This objection would be important if it were sustained by comparison of the Acts and the Epistles. It is not so sustained. The objection itself seems to be based on a misconception of the whole of the Scriptural documents. St. Paul nowhere speaks as though he had no word of instruction nor of comfort to the Jew. His message is to Jew and to Gentile alike, not to one to the exclusion of the other. He at no time turned away from the Jews until they had turned from him; and this necessarily implies that he had first turned to the Jews, and had sought to declare his message to them—in other words, that his mission comprehended them even though it extended to the Gentiles also;⁴ indeed, the accusation of his enemies was, that he taught "all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses."⁵ He is called a teacher, or an "Apostle to the Gentiles,"⁶ not because his mission was to the Gentiles only, but because, unlike the prophets under the old dis-

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 207.

⁴ Acts xviii. 6. ⁵ Acts xxi. 21.

² Ibid. p. 208. ³ Matt. xvi. 18.

⁶ 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11.

pensation, his mission embraced both Jew and Gentile. Though it was the distinguishing feature of the Gospel that it was preached "to the poor,"¹ we are not to infer from this that it was not preached to the rich, but that, unlike the philosophic systems of the heathen world, it addressed both. So of the calling in of the Gentiles and the mission of St. Paul to them. The great truth which he everywhere proclaimed was this, that there was no difference in Christ between the Jew and the Gentile, that they had the same Lord, the same need of a Redeemer, the same message of salvation. Having proved that all, "both Jews and Gentiles," were under sin,² he tells his Christian converts that they were all baptized into one body, "whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be bond or free."³ His teaching was that there is "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and power to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile."⁴ If, then, we were to find him in *the Acts of the Apostles*—as Dr. Davidson thinks he ought, consistently with his being the "Apostle of the Gentiles," to have done—excluding the Jew from his ministry, and addressing himself exclusively, or even chiefly, to the Gentiles, and yet in the Epistles declaring over and over again that there was but "one body,"⁵ and that all Christians, of whatever race, were "one in Christ Jesus," this might throw some suspicion on the authenticity of one or other of these writings. The contrary, however, is the fact: in the Epistles he proclaims the oneness of all men in Christ;⁶ and consistently with this fundamental Christian principle we find him everywhere in *the Acts of the Apostles* preaching to both alike, and showing thus practically that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord "over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."⁷

Nor is there anything in any of his Epistles which countenances the belief that St. Paul was indifferent to the

¹ Matt. xi. 5.

² Rom. iii. 9.

⁵ Ephes. iv. 4.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

⁶ Gal. iii. 28; Eph. ii. 14.

⁴ Rom. ii. 9, 10.

⁷ Rom. x. 12.

welfare of the Jew, nor that he was the "Apostle to the Gentiles" to the exclusion of the Jew. Throughout his Epistles the tenderness of St. Paul and his burning zeal for his "brethren after the flesh," is referred to again and again, and what by his pen he affirms that he felt, he shows by his conduct as recorded by St. Luke. Thus in writing to the Church at Rome, he says, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."¹ Pleading with them, he says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved;"² so that we should have grounds for surprise and even for doubt about the authorship of the Epistles or of *the Acts of the Apostles*, if in this latter book we found him represented as in any way disregarding the Jews, and not attempting to make them sharers in the same grace which he had received. He could only have become indifferent to their conversion from a belief in the hopelessness of all attempts to bring them within the bosom of the Christian Church, and from a conviction that they had been utterly rejected of God. Yet so far was this from being the belief of St. Paul, that he asks, as though it were a conclusion too monstrous for belief, "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid, for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew."³ His faith, indeed, taught him "that Israel shall be saved;"⁴ accordingly, as he himself asserts, he ceased not to teach among the Jews as well as to the Gentiles. Thus, in writing to the Corinthians, he says, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law."⁵ It is true that Christ was revealed to St. Paul in order that he "might preach Him among the heathen,"⁶ and that he was "ordained a preacher and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles,"⁷ yet the "Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto" him "as the Gospel of the circumcision

¹ Rom. ix. 2, 3.⁴ Ibid. xi. 26. ⁶ 1 Cor. ix. 20.² Ibid. x. 1. ³ Ibid. xi. 1, 2.⁶ Gal. i. 16. ⁷ 1 Tim. ii. 7.

was unto Peter,"¹ but only *as* it was committed unto Peter; and since this did not hinder Peter from preaching to the uncircumcised, as in the case of Cornelius and of others, so St. Paul being "a teacher of the Gentiles," did not prevent his being a teacher of the Jews also, and of assisting to make the Gentiles "to partake of the spiritual things" of the Jews;² not, however, to supplant them or eject them from the vineyard of God. Now compare this testimony of the Epistles with the practice of the Apostles as exhibited in *the Acts*, where we are told that he "preached the word of God in the synagogue of the Jews,"³ and we shall see the perfect harmony which exists between these two records in their exhibition of the conduct of St. Paul. Nor must we forget that these synagogues were at that moment, when the heathen were seeking after something more sure and satisfying than the old mythological fables philosophized into nothingness, resorted to by "Greeks"⁴ and by "Gentiles,"⁵ as well as by Israelites. Thus of Antioch in Pisidia we read, "When the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath,"⁶ and accordingly "the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God," so that "when the Jews saw the multitudes they were filled with envy," and thus "the word of God was published throughout all the region," to Jew and to Gentile alike. At Corinth, again, St. Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jew and the Greek."⁷ In one of the Epistles of St. Paul we read his assertion that "unto the Jews" he "became as a Jew,"⁸ and was careful to perform the rites of the Mosaic law. This, also, is what we find him doing as recorded in *the Acts of the Apostles*, purifying himself according to the prescribed ritual of the Jewish law, and going into the temple as required by the law.⁹ And neither in the Epistles, nor in this book of *the Acts*, is there any intimation that the Jewish converts—and all the Apostles

¹ Gal. ii. 7.² Rom. xv. 27.³ Ibid.⁷ Acts xviii. 4.³ Acts xiii. 5.⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 20.⁴ Ibid. xiv. 1.⁵ Ibid. xiii. 42.⁹ Acts xxi. 21—28.

were Jews—were free to disregard the observances of the Mosaic law, to which by birth they had been bound. It is, then, no objection to the historic accuracy of the book of *the Acts of the Apostles*, that it sets forth a man who systematically went to the Jews first, and continued to address them till he was driven to find another audience, and that St. Paul is represented as seeking “his own countrymen first, labouring among them till he could do so no longer, and leaving them with reluctance to go to the Gentiles.”¹ This, whatever may be said for or against the conduct of the Apostle in his mission in this respect, is in perfect harmony with every word of his Epistles, and with all the facts of Christianity. The Apostles were sent forth to gather men into “one fold,”² to preach alike to the circumcision and to the uncircumcision, though to the circumcision first, and to “break down the middle wall of separation”³ between the Jew and the Gentile, and St. Paul throughout his whole career was mindful of this charge.

Other objections, though not standing next in order to this latter, in the pages of Dr. Davidson it will be convenient to classify and examine in this place. In the speeches of St. Peter, the critic discovers a “Pauline idea” which compels him to reject them as unhistorical, whilst often in the speeches of St. Paul he detects the presence of a “Petrine idea” which compels him consistently with his system to reject these speeches also, or at least to regard them as unauthoritative. He says, “The centre and substance of the Pauline ministry consisted of man’s universal sinfulness, justification by faith without works, and the abolition of the law. How prominently these appear in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians is plain to every reader. None of them is inculcated in Paul’s discourse to Jews and Gentiles recorded in the Acts.”⁴ The difficulty or objection is here twofold—the existence of “a Pauline idea,” and then its absence in the apologetic speeches recorded in *the Acts of the Apostles*.

What is meant by “a Pauline idea”? Its nature Dr.

¹ Dr. Davidson’s Introduction, vol. ii. p. 210.

² John x. 16. Eph. ii. 14.

⁴ Davidson, ii. 212.

Davidson explains to consist in the presence of certain doctrines. But how far can these be considered "Pauline"? In the dark ages there was a popular story in which the origin of the Apostles' Creed was related. In it each of the twelve is represented as contributing a single sentence, and the whole of these sentences united in one became the early creed of the Christian Church. Frescoes on walls, old glass in windows, have perpetuated this pleasant story, which, however, has no claim to be regarded as historic. Modern criticism has discarded this old traditional myth or fable: it has done more, it has appropriated the "idea" to itself. According to the teaching of the "higher criticism," Christianity is made up of a number of "ideas," contributed to the common stock by different apostles. Thus the "Pauline idea," the contribution of St. Paul, is "man's universal sinfulness, justification by faith without works, and the abolition of the law,"¹ and, as the writer elsewhere adds, "redemption by the blood of Jesus."² The "Petrine idea," the contribution of St. Peter to the doctrines of the Church of Christ, may be traced in the various Judaizing elements which still exist in Christianity. The influence of St. John is exhibited in the prominence of the doctrine of the love of God towards mankind. Thus far the old dark-ages myth and the modern critical "idea" are at one. The latter is but an idealized form of the older legend. Here, however, the resemblance fails, and the two become antagonistic. In the fancy, as it appeared in the dark ages, each apostle contributed a truth which then became the common property of the whole Church: in the story, as it appears in the writings of the modern critical school, each apostle brought indeed a personal "idea" into Christianity, but he brought it not as a contribution to the common stock, he kept it, at least for his lifetime, rigidly to himself, so that a writing in which "universal sinfulness, justification by faith without works, and redemption by the blood of Jesus" appears is—whatever external evidence may affirm to the contrary—the writing or the speech of St. Paul: wherever we have any trace of the influence of

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 212.

² Ibid., p. 211.

Judaism, there is the language or the hand of St. Peter, though the speech or the writing may profess to be that of St. Paul. From the nature of the case, this conclusion of the modern critical school cannot be proven, and is contrary to the testimony given in writings which are vouched for as authentic by abundant external evidence. It is a conclusion which rests only on the readiness of the mind to accept it as true without examination. One or two words, then, as to its antecedent probability.

In the nature of things we may expect to find an apostle, like other teachers, turning more frequently and more fondly to one "idea" or truth of Christianity than to others. It is so now, it ever has been so, from the constitution of the human mind we are justified in believing that it always will be so. One man will, from the circumstances of his past life, and from natural temperament, dwell more constantly on the tokens of God's love; another will delight to set forth more constantly the evidences of His almighty power: one lingering longer on His pardoning mercy, another on His sustaining love. This is but nature, and grace does not destroy nature, but spiritualizes it; it corrects its shortcomings, it strengthens it where but for this it would be feeble, and it inspires it with a loftier motive for action. What Saul was, that we may still trace in St. Paul. What Peter was before the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, that he substantially was afterwards, less self-confident, indeed, which was his weakness, but not less bold.

Bearing this truth in remembrance, we should, then, expect to trace some difference in the writings and speeches of men, so different in natural disposition and in the gift of intellect, as St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul. We have reason, before examining their writings, to anticipate that one will recur more frequently to one feature of the Christian scheme of doctrine, the other to a different feature. This, however, will not justify us in inferring that the "idea," thought, or truth, most frequently insisted on by any one of them, was the produce of his own mind, and the growth of his own consciousness, and was not inspired from

without, and was not, therefore, the common possession of all of the Apostles. For what, after all, is the source of this "Pauline idea?" Did it rise out of the waste of old Pharisaism? Is it an echo of the teaching of the classical schools of Tarsus? or did the Apostle carry it off with him from Judaism or from heathenism? From none of these—thus much Dr. Davidson must needs confess, for if from any of these it would not be "Pauline." If, however, as we allege, and as the whole of his writings show, St. Paul learnt it from the teaching of Christ, then it is difficult for us to understand how the "idea" could become his to the exclusion of the other Apostles, who had listened to Christ's teaching whilst they accompanied Him in his journeys throughout Judæa and Galilee. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"¹ are the words of Christ; and salvation thus promised and imparted to the individual is justification, if justification be taken as the making just, and not in a mere forensic sense of being declared just. Now, this so-called "Pauline idea" was the common property of all who believed in Christ, and was taught them as the ground of their hope and expectation of salvation, so that whether dwelt on more frequently or no by one or the other of the Apostles, it was in no sense the peculiar property of St. Paul, and would necessarily appear in the writings and speeches of others beside him. Hence in this very particular Dr. Davidson confesses that "the Apostle Peter speaking in the Acts goes as far as Paul. He preaches the forgiveness of sin oftener than the latter, calls the law an intolerable burden, and states universal salvation by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts xv. 7, 11."² Thus St. Peter, in the very commencement of the Apostolic ministry, echoing the "idea," and using these words of his Master, says, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."³ This is Pauline, it is equally Petrine, for the simple reason that it is Christine.

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

² Davidson, ii. p. 212.

³ Acts ii. 38, 39.

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A speech of St. Peter occurring later in the book of *the Acts* ¹ is rejected by Dr. Davidson for a similar reason. It is, he thinks, more Pauline than Petrine, and an additional ground for suspicion is that a few words in the speech bear, as he considers, a resemblance to some words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans.² In what the resemblance consists it would require great ingenuity to discover, and greater still to make apparent to most readers. There is hardly one word in common in the two passages, and the whole of the resemblance arises from the fact that both writers were Christian teachers, living at the same time, surrounded by the like circumstances, and sharers in the same ministry. Again, one verse ³ occurring in this speech of St. Peter is marked as suspicious by Dr. Davidson, because he considers it not altogether unlike a passage in one of St. Paul's Epistles,⁴ though beyond the fact that each passage contains the word "peace" there is no resemblance between them. But, says Dr. Davidson, the resemblance is easily accounted for, as the speech is certainly not genuine, and he alleges as a sufficient reason for coming to this conclusion that it is fitter for St. Paul than for St. Peter. He tells us that St. Peter never, "or but rarely," uses such sentences as that "God is no respecter of persons," and that through the name of Christ "whosoever believes in Him, shall obtain remission of their sins," and when these and many other passages in his speeches and Epistles contradict this, he simply rejects the passages because they do not accord with his *à priori* conclusion of what St. Peter might and would have said. In short, all external evidences, and all internal as well, are declared worthless except such as conform to the internal prepossessions of a modern critic.

But if St. Peter's speeches are rejected as not being genuine because a few words in them resemble some few words of St. Paul in his Epistles, Dr. Davidson does not treat St. Paul with any more consideration. Thus he decides that the speech spoken by St. Paul at Antioch in

¹ Acts x. 34—43.

² Rom. ii. 10.

³ Acts ii. 36.

⁴ Ephes. ii. 17.

Pisidia, and recorded in *the Acts*,¹ is not genuine, because the first part bears some resemblance to the speech of St. Stephen, whilst the latter part has more of the Petrine than of the Pauline idea. As though we ought not to expect to find traces of St. Stephen's speech in the language of St. Paul whether spoken or written; as though that remarkable exposition of St. Stephen's faith which prepared St. Paul for his conversion would not, almost necessarily, have been branded on his memory, and have tinged his whole after thought and speech. As to the latter part of the charge, that the speech ought to be rejected because it resembles in some of its features a speech of St. Peter, or at least contains in it some trace of "the Petrine idea," the author is applying a novel canon of criticism by which to test the genuineness of this speech. The speech of St. Peter is rejected as untrustworthy, because it is thought to resemble a speech of St. Paul's, and St. Paul's speech is at the same time rejected, because it resembles the speaking of St. Peter. "The address of Peter contains a Pauline sentiment,"² it is accordingly rejected. There is in the speech of St. Paul at Antioch³ a "paragraph which resembles Peter's first discourse, . . . and a Judaistic tinge detracts from its true type."⁴ Therefore, it is in a similar way rejected. It is a weariness of the flesh and of the spirit to dwell on such childish attempts at exercising "the critical faculty," and I feel that I ought to apologize to my readers for doing that which it is as irksome for me to write as it will be for others to read. Yet it is right to notice such objections, since on these childish grounds the authenticity of *the Acts* is impugned by many even adult persons in these days.

Much of what is said about "the Pauline" or "the Petrine idea" seems to have arisen from misconception as to the permanency of the Jewish institutions, and the nature of the questionings about the ingathering of the Gentiles, which perplexed the infant Church. After the ascension of Christ, it may be as the fruit of His "speaking of the things

¹ Acts xiii. 16—41.

² Davidson, ii. p. 227.

³ Acts xiii. 16—41.

⁴ Davidson, ii. p. 230.

pertaining to the kingdom of God,"¹ the Apostles never appear to have doubted that the message of Christ was to all, that the benefits of His death were for all, and that "every creature"² was to be invited to enter into the "one fold."³ St. Peter states this truth as fully and as unhesitatingly as St. Paul. Thus in his first public speech after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit he spake to the "men of Judæa," and to "all that dwell in Jerusalem," and declared that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;"⁴ again, "the promise is to you and to your children," but not only to them, but also "*to all that are afar off.*"⁵ It is a mistake to suppose that the question which for a time was discussed by the Apostles, and on which for a while there seems to have been a contrary opinion and contrariant practice, was as to the admission of the Gentiles to all the privileges, and hopes, and promises of the Christian covenant; but this, whether it was necessary for the Gentile convert to pass through Judaism into Christianity, and to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses,⁶ as a preliminary requisite for his becoming a member of Christ. This was the question discussed at the Council of Jerusalem, not whether the Gospel was given to Jew and to Gentile alike, for of this there never was a doubt in the mind of any of the Apostles from the time of the Lord's ascension. It is therefore misleading, because untrue, to speak of such doctrines as the universality of the Gospel message, "of justification by faith, and redemption by the blood of Christ," and "of remission of sins," as being portions of "the Pauline idea." Since these truths were taught and confirmed by Peter before the conversion of Saul, and due regard being paid to the circumstances under which St. Luke wrote *the Acts of the Apostles*, these truths are as evident and conspicuous in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark as in the writings of St. Luke.

Dr. Davidson and those objectors whose criticism he reproduces here confound three distinct doctrines, and the controversies arising out of them. These are, first, that all

¹ Acts i. 3. ² Mark xvi. 15.

³ John x. 16. ⁴ Acts ii. 21.

⁵ Acts ii. 39.

⁶ Acts xv. 1—21; Matt. xxviii. 19.

men, whether Jews or Gentiles, were alike called to share in the blessings conferred by Christ, the Messiah. This no Christian ever questioned, though it was a truth which offended the unconverted Jew. Secondly, whether the Gentile converts were required to submit to circumcision and to render obedience to the whole ceremonial law of Moses, together with the faith in Christ. Thirdly, whether the ceremonial law was abrogated even in the case of the Jew who had embraced Christianity. This latter stage, however, was not attained until Jerusalem had been destroyed, the temple levelled with the ground, and the Jewish polity brought to an end.¹

Forgetfulness of the distinction between these three distinct stages in the progress from Judaism to Christianity has led to another objection. Dr. Davidson asks, "How is it that Paul circumcised Timothy a considerable time after he refused to circumcise Titus? Did he retrograde in his principles? Not according to his own epistles."² The slightest comparison of passages in *the Acts* and in the Epistles referring to this incident will enable us to answer this question and to reconcile this "variance." Titus was, we are told, *a Greek*,³ the son of heathen parents. Timothy, on the contrary, was "the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed, but his father was a Greek."⁴ Titus, the Apostle says, "being a Greek was not compelled to be circumcised."⁵ Timothy being, according to the same testimony, the son of a Jewess was circumcised.⁶ Here we have clearly stated to us what the distinction observed by

¹ "Some modern writers have confounded together the different steps by which the distinction of Jew and Gentile were removed in the Christian Church. Since it is of great importance to a right understanding of the early history of Christianity that they should be clearly distinguished, it may not be amiss to mention them here:

"1. The admission of the Gentiles (in the first instance, *εὐσεβείς*) to the Christian Church. Acts x., xi.

"2. The freedom of Gentile converts from the ceremonial law. Acts xv.

"3. The indifference of the ceremonial law for Jewish converts. Gal. ii. 14—16; Acts xxi. 20—26.

"4. The incompatibility of Judaism with Christianity.

"The first three—that is, the essential—principles are recognized in Scripture; the last, which introduces the new element, is envolved in the history of the Church."—*Westcott on the Canon of the New Testament*, p. 57 (2nd edit.).

² Davidson, ii. p. 220.

³ Gal. ii. 3.

⁴ Acts xvi. 1.

⁵ Gal. ii. 3.

⁶ Acts xvi. 3.

the Apostles was, and St. Paul acts in perfect accord with the rest of the Apostles in this particular. To the Gentiles they urged that circumcision availed nothing, and they bade the converts from heathenism "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free."¹ To the Jewish converts, however, they nowhere prescribe neglect of the commandments of the ceremonial law, nor do they sanction any departure from the requirements given by Moses. There is, however, no inconsistency in this. If the circumstances of Titus and Timothy had been the same as to parentage we should, without doubt, have found the Apostle² prescribing the same rule. Since their circumstances were different, one being born under obligation to the law, and the other free from such obligation, St. Paul prescribed a different rule.

Akin to this objection is another. Dr. Davidson tells us that in *the Acts of the Apostles* "the nature of St. Paul's teaching is mostly apologetic," and that whether preaching to Jew or to Gentile there is in the speeches attributed to this Apostle nothing "distinctively Pauline, such as justification by faith and redemption by the blood of Jesus."² Yet surely the nature of his speeches, as apologetic, necessarily makes them to differ from the epistles. These speeches are of two kinds, the first were spoken to Jews, with whom St. Paul always argues from grounds common to himself and to them, and unfolds the spiritual teaching of the law and the types of the Mosaic ritual. Those of the second class are addressed to heathen, to whom St. Paul appeals from the stand-point of the natural law. In neither case is there any place for "justification by faith, and redemption by the blood of Jesus." The only recorded speech in which we might fairly expect anything "distinctively Pauline," that is, the introduction of such topics as these which Dr. Davidson misses in the apologetic speeches, is in the speech to the Elders of Ephesus,³ since there St. Paul is addressing Christians, the same class of hearers as those for whom his Epistles were written, and here Dr. Davidson confesses that "the Pauline idea of the death of

¹ Gal. v. 1.² Davidson, ii. p. 211.³ Acts xx. 17—35.

Christ is expressed.”¹ To speak alike to the Jew who denied the Messiahship of Christ, and to the Athenian given over to the worship of a Pantheon of false gods, about “justification by faith, and redemption by the blood of Christ,” would be to speak in a language unknown to them, and to do what we can hardly conceive of St. Paul doing, and the absence of such topics in his address to prejudiced Jews and to unbelievers is as natural as is their presence in letters addressed to believers.

Let us test this criticism of Dr. Davidson by endeavouring to apply it. Would a learned Christian missionary address to a Mahomedan abroad, and to an atheist at home, the same topics as to a congregation of Christians? Would he endeavour to convince the one by proving that Christ was the Messiah, and the other that the world was created, or by discoursing on “justification by faith, and redemption by the blood of Jesus?” That which would be calculated to move the professed believer to repentance from sin, and to urge him to holiness of life, would not be applicable to one who denied the faith, and who had not heard of Jesus. In his Epistles St. Paul is writing to “saints,” in his speeches he is addressing unbelievers. Common sense would forbid his using the same language in each case.

The last objection under this head, which I think it necessary to notice, is this, that St. Paul is represented in *the Acts of the Apostles* as saying, “I have committed nothing against this people, or customs of our fathers,”² whereas, according to Dr. Davidson, “All his energies were directed to the overthrow of the Mosaic institutions by preaching faith in Christ as a substitute.”³ Now, in the first place, it must be noted that the writer of *the Acts* is at any rate consistent with himself in what he elsewhere records, or, as the critic would say, puts into the mouth of St. Paul. In the second place, he is consistent with the mind of St. Paul as shown in the Epistles. Thus the writer of *the Acts*

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 211. Elsewhere, however, he says “that the address at Miletus is of the same character as the rest,” p. 241.

² Acts xxviii. 17.

³ Davidson, ii. p. 226, quoting from Baur's *Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi*.

represents St. Paul as declaring his belief of "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets,"¹ and that in all his preaching he taught "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come,"² and that to the elders of the Jews at Rome who came to him "he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening."³ And this assertion of the harmony of the teaching of the law and the prophets with the truths revealed by Christ, and with the facts of His incarnate life, is not peculiar to the writer of *the Acts of the Apostles*; the same is insisted on continually by St. Paul in his Epistles. Thus in writing to the members of the same Church, to whom by word of mouth he declared that he had "committed nothing against the people or customs of his fathers," if he taught that the righteousness of God is not limited to, is "without the law," he yet taught that it was "witnessed by the law and the prophets,"⁴ and, whether rightly or wrongly, for this is not the question, but only as to the consistency of the words of St. Paul with all the acts of his life, he is ever declaring his reverence for the law of Moses, and for "the customs of our fathers." Like St. Stephen,⁵ the Apostle dwells constantly on his being a sharer in all the promises made to the whole seed of Abraham, and he is ever putting forward—if we may so say, proudly—his oneness with the Jews, and his descent after the flesh from the patriarchs of their nation.⁶ What he does teach is that the existing Jews had lost sight of the meaning of the ceremonial law, had obscured its teaching, and in consequence had departed from the law and the prophets, and "the customs of our fathers." In short, that the law and the prophets pointed to Christ whom he taught, but whom the Jews had rejected and crucified.

It will be at once evident that this class of objections is not directed against the book itself because of any

¹ Acts xxiv. 14. ² Acts xxvi. 22.

⁶ Rom. xi. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil.

³ Acts xxviii. 23. ⁴ Rom. iii. 21.

iii. 5. Compare these passages with

⁵ Acts vii. 1, 11, 12, 15, etc.

Acts xxii. 3.

self-contradictions, nor on account of its contradiction to the facts of history and the statements in other books, nor, again, because of its violation of any recognized canons of criticism, but they rise out of this, that the facts or sentiments in the book are not in conformity to some imaginary rules, some antecedent idea in the mind of the critic as to what ought to be found there, or, as often, they arise from some misconception on the part of the critic of the history of the times, or of the current of thought among the people of whom the book treats. On this whole class of objections it must suffice to say that against such criticisms it is impossible to guard: they are as impalpable as fancy, as unassailable as the decision of private taste. No book ever has been written, no book probably could be written, which would not be open to such objections. The objections in the next class are fortunately more tangible, though I believe they are hardly more formidable.

It will be, perhaps, the most convenient way of examining these objections to classify them according to chronology, or at least with regard to the position of the statements impugned in *the Acts of the Apostles*.

1. The first objection to be noticed is the account preserved in *the Acts* of "the gift of tongues." On this Dr. Davidson observes, "the narrative of the gift of tongues bestowed on the Apostles at Pentecost disagrees with the description given of it by the Apostle Paul. It is plain that the writer of *the Acts* supposes this gift to have consisted in the power of speaking new languages, because the strangers present expressed their astonishment at hearing Galileans speak in their own tongues. This implies that they understood both the words and ideas of the discourses. But the first Epistle to the Corinthians makes the gift of tongues to consist in the power of uttering inarticulate sounds in an ecstatic state—the ability to express a collection of unintelligible sounds belonging to no articulate language, under a condition of enthusiastic phrenzy."¹ It is hard to believe that the original objector—for Dr. Davidson does but collect and arrange, and sometimes strengthen the objections

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 222—3.

of others—could have read the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians here referred to. There is there no word about “inarticulate sounds in an ecstatic state,” but much the reverse. The Apostle contrasts and classifies the speaking “with tongues” with prophesying, and says that the latter is more important to the Church, except he who uses the first gift should “interpret,”¹ but an “inarticulate sound spoken in an ecstatic state” cannot be interpreted. It has no meaning. Again, St. Paul says that he that speaks in an unknown tongue—not an inarticulate sound—will be “a barbarian”² to him to whom he speaks, because his tongue is a barbarous one, that is, it is an articulate one, but one in a foreign language, and so not intelligible to him who only knows Greek or Latin. There is, then, absolutely not the semblance of “contradiction” or of “variance” between the words of St. Paul in his Epistle and the account given by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. The Apostle in the former is contending against the abuse of the gift. He would that they who had this gift should use it not as a mere sign of a power conferred on them, which some seem to have done, but should use it to “edify” others, and that because “tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe;”³ therefore, in the Church—for of ministering in the Church only is he speaking—where no such sign was needed, he prefers the gift of prophesying or of preaching to that of the gift of the tongues.⁴

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 5.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 11.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

⁴ Elsewhere Dr. Davidson thinks the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles contradictory in itself, since though the miraculous gift consisted, according, at least, to the account of the writer, in enabling those who possessed it to speak in languages understood by divers nations, and, therefore, in the use of articulate speech, yet in answer to the charge *these men are full of new wine*, St. Peter says, “These are not drunken” (Acts ii. 13, 15), but drunk-

en speech is not articulate speech in a language unknown to the hearer. The objection is an old one, and in reproducing it Dr. Davidson was bound in fairness to take some notice of the answer which has frequently been made, and to point out its defect if it does not sufficiently answer the objection. Dr. Burton, though not replying to the objection yet incidentally, says, “St. Peter addressed himself to both descriptions, *ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλὴμ*,—the latter expression meaning the *sojourners in Jerusalem*, not the settled inhabitants—

2. Several of the objections made by Dr. Davidson, or collected by him from other writers, against the truth of the narrative in the book of *the Acts*, are avowedly not critical but theological. He rejects any statement which would compel the admission that a miracle had or might have been worked, because he does not believe in miracles. He will not allow that a Gospel or any other book in the Old or New Testament was written before the date of an event foreshadowed or prophesied of in such book, because he does not believe in prophecy. He thus sweeps away all evidence, external and internal, which would satisfy any investigator were the book one of secular history, on the *à priori* grounds that no facts are miraculous, and that prophecy is, in the way which we ordinarily mean when we speak of prophecy, impossible. He thus rejects the account of the death of Ananias and Sapphira because of its "miraculous" element as well as on account of its "harshness," which prevents the critic from accepting the fact as historical, at least in the way it is told. The nucleus of it may be true,¹ though what that "nucleus" is we are not informed. The history of the raising of the lame man at the gate of the temple is also set aside, and that for the same reason, "it must be classed with miracles in general," and the reader is invited to "resolve the description of these into the mythical growth of after times,"² though how it can be the growth of after times, when it stands in every copy of *the Acts* from the first century until our own days, Dr. Davidson does not inform us. Subsequent miraculous cases of healing cannot, he thinks, be accepted because they imply a "magical power," and are "extravagances of

and he appears to appeal to all of them, when he reminded them of the miracles which Jesus had worked, *as ye yourselves also know*, ii. 21. The miraculous gift of tongues would be likely to make most impression upon the foreign Jews, because they had heard each their own language; the native Jews would only hear men speaking in a language which was not that of Palestine, and which to themselves was un-

intelligible. This distinction seems to be marked in the 12th and 13th verses: *And they*, i. e. the foreign Jews (see ver. 11), *were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others*, i. e. the native Jews, *said, These men are full of new wine.*"—*Bampton Lectures*, 1829, p. 258.

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 244.

² Ibid.

the miraculous," such as should "lead a reader to reject them, not only on the occasions mentioned, but on others."¹

3. The same formula is applied by the critic to the account of the delivery of the Apostles from prison. That they should be supernaturally delivered is "suspicious," and an additional reason is given for the rejection of the narrative, which is this, that "the miracle was useless, because the liberated are imprisoned again."² We have, however, no right to assume that the miracle was "frustrated" because the Apostles were again imprisoned. It may be that the miracle was wrought as a sign to the persecutors, another motive for repentance, and that it did produce repentance in the case of many, and was a cause of the increase in the number of the believers. At any rate, it inspired the Apostles with confidence in Him who could deliver them from the fury of man, so that they went forth and "spake the word of God with boldness,"³ and the number and zeal and perseverance of believers were increased. Other miracles are then cited, though not examined by the critic, but dismissed in the same uncritical way as "unhistoric" or "fictitious" because of the same miraculous element.

4. As though this comprehensive way of dealing with miraculous incidents were not enough, Dr. Davidson has another—I will not call it argument, but—ground for suspicion. The incident or miracle resembles, in some of its particulars, some other incident, and this should caution us, he thinks, against believing in it, or even induce us to reject the account of the incident itself. This is a very common objection. It will, however, not endure examination. The healing of the lame man at Lystra is rejected because it resembles the healing of another lame man by Peter, as though the miraculous healing of one lame man must not necessarily have some resemblance to all cases of a like healing. All was wrought, the writer tells us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and since the healer is one, and the lack of power in the lame man is one, the fair inference is that the cure would be a similar one. How much of the history of mankind would be a blank if this principle or

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 244.

² Ibid.

³ Acts iv. 31.

canon of criticism were accepted? And we cannot really adopt a canon and believe in it and not apply it. Are we to reject the countless number of incidents which resemble other incidents because of the fact of such resemblance? And this is what Dr. Davidson calls upon us to do, though he himself does not apply his canon to any other books than those of Holy Scripture. Has not the recurrence of like incidents become a proverb, and do not men speak of history as "an old almanack," because the actions of men have almost as close a resemblance one towards another as the changes of the moon? History would have no value but for this resemblance, which Dr. Davidson makes a ground for rejecting the Scriptural narratives. As though William of Orange, and Henry IV. of France, and Buckingham, and Mr. Perceval, were not assassinated, because the incident of men in power perishing by the hand of political fanatics bears "suspicious" resemblance to the murder of Julius Cæsar or of Sennacherib.

5. The value of history in this very respect is seen in the next objection which I shall notice. Dr. Davidson calls upon us to set aside the whole of that part of *the Acts* which treats of the conduct of the Pharisees and Sadducees towards the Apostles and disciples of Christ immediately after the ascension. "Were their antipathies changed," he asks, "so soon after the crucifixion of Jesus?"¹ I believe that the providence of God was evidenced in the lull which ensued after the crucifixion of Christ, and which permitted the Apostles in comparative peace to fulfil the work of their mission in Jerusalem. But putting out of sight for a moment this feature of the case, is it a fact that bodies of men are usually consistent in their antipathies and resentments, so that there never ensues a similar lull to that which took place in the beginning of the Church? Or is it so that even if their antipathies are unchanged, yet that the outward indulgence of those antipathies remain unchanged? Is it not rather the rule than the exception to find the commission of some terrible crime committed by "bodies of men" followed by languor, or even by that

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 245.

change of antipathies into sympathies, which in secular history and politics has obtained the name of reaction. Because they feared the people, and felt that they dared not trust them to assist in their deed of blood, the Pharisees and Priests took counsel, and seized Jesus by night, and hurried on His condemnation, and forced the Roman Governor, through fear of being accused at the bar of Cæsar, to consent to the crucifixion of Christ on the next day, and before the people could recover from their frenzy and rescue Him. This His enemies feared. And now the first frenzy of zeal had passed away, the momentary exasperation of the people had been satisfied with the death of Christ, their fury satiated by His blood, and their remorse stimulated by the report of Christ's resurrection, and by the miracles of healing wrought through means of His Apostles. Had we no word recorded in *the Acts* of any change on the part of the people, and, therefore, of greater moderation in the policy of their rulers, we might have predicted from the almost invariable testimony of history, that this lull in the popular indignation would take place, and that their priests and rulers, again fearing the people, would for a time be cautious and conciliatory in their treatment of the Apostles and other disciples of Christ.

6. Though Dr. Davidson thinks that the "account of the election of deacons and of Stephen is historical," yet it is, he says, intermingled with "various legendary elements," and the speech attributed to St. Stephen is, "in part, the free composition of the writer,"¹ so that practically the speech is of no value, since it is not possible for us to disentangle the true from the false. He says, however, that "there is no doubt he was accused, and put to death by the Jews." Why we are to conclude that one part of the account is historical, and another part "legendary;" why we are to believe that "in part" the speech of St. Stephen is his own, and "in part" that it is St. Luke's; why we are to think that one part of the narrative is free from "doubt," and that other parts should make us "doubt," Dr. Davidson does not say. He gives no rules to enable us to discriminate between the true and the

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 245.

false, the historical and the fictitious. Though if there were any rules it would obviously be right to state them, and thus enable the reader to form his own judgment on these points. Of course the critic has some rules for his guidance, some premises from which he draws his conclusions, these, however, are not stated.

7. The speech made by St. Stephen before the Sanhedrim has, we are told, "many historical mistakes;" these, however, are "owing to the incomplete materials which the writer possessed,"¹ and that writer, as Dr. Davidson elsewhere tells us, lived in the second century, and published the book of *the Acts* about A.D. 125. The mistakes are these:—

i. "The departure of Abraham after his father's death from Haran is irreconcilable with the dates in Genesis. Abraham quitted Haran when he was 75, i. e. when his father was 145; yet his father lived to be 205.

ii. "The narrative of Abraham's purchase in Genesis xxiii. disagrees with the statement that he did not possess a foot of the promised land.

iii. "The number of Jacob's family which went down to Egypt is said to be 75 (vii. 14), whereas in Genesis it is 70.

iv. "All the sons of Jacob are said to have been buried in Palestine (vii. 16), which does not harmonize with Genesis.

v. "Jacob is said to have been buried in Sychem; whereas according to Genesis his body was laid in the cave of Machpelah by Hebron.

vi. "Abraham bought a field of the sons of Hamor (vii. 16); whereas Jacob bought it (Gen. xxxiii. 19). Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah.

vii. "It is stated that Moses was mighty *in words* (vii. 22), which is at variance with Exod. iv. 10.

viii. "Instead of Babylon (vii. 43), Amos has Damascus. "Thus the divergences from the Old Testament are numerous."²

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 236.

² Ibid., pp. 235, 236.

As these various objections occur in the speech of St. Stephen, and as some of them deserve a detailed examination, it will be convenient to consider their relevancy when I comment on the seventh chapter of this book: I therefore defer any notice of them until then.

8. The narrative of the conversion of St. Paul is set aside as wholly imaginary, a mental process, not stimulated by any outward manifestation whatever. "It is best," says the writer whom I am citing, "to conceive of the whole process of Paul's conversion as an inward operation; a spiritual revelation of Christ to the higher self-consciousness. Former experiences in his own mind, and the death of Stephen, had probably prepared him for such internal revelation of the Redeemer. The phenomenon was subjective, not objective. The Apostle's higher self-consciousness found partial expression for itself in external circumstances. . . Though psychology cannot account for the revolution that took place within him, it is as unnecessary as it is unphilosophical to assume that all the phenomena described as external were really so."¹ As, according to the confession of Dr. Davidson, "psychology cannot account for the revolution," and as he makes no attempt at any explanation himself, except to suggest that no "external circumstances" took place, the reader is really left to decide whether the evidence of the Apostle and of others is to be taken in preference to the mere suggestion of the critic. It is difficult to find arguments to reply to what is merely an absence of argument.

9. In one particular, however, Dr. Davidson is more definite in his charge, and thus enables us to test the value of his objections. In the ninth chapter the writer of *the Acts* tells us that, "the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man."² Whereas in the twenty-second chapter we are told by St. Paul himself that "they heard not the voice of him that spake to them."³ The difficulty, however, at this place, if there be indeed any difficulty, is confined to those who use the English translation only. In the first place we read ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς, in the

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 247.

² Acts ix. 7.

³ Acts xxii. 9.

latter we are told that the men τὴν δὲ φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν τοῦ λαλοῦντος. In the first passage we are told that they "heard" [the sound] "of the voice," in the latter that they did not hear the voice of [that which was said by] the speaker. The distinction is one not peculiar to the Greek language, it is in accordance with a common English idiom, e. g.

"Did you hear him speak?"

I heard him speaking.

What did he say?

I was so far off I did not hear."

We have here a direct contradiction, so far as words go. No one, however, in his senses would assert that there was any contradiction in reality between these two assertions. As to the passage in the Greek, any ordinary lexicon would have shown that there was no difficulty whatever. I prefer the reference to an ordinary lexicon, and to a classical one, because they were certainly within reach of Dr. Davidson; because the common, every-day meaning of φωνή is best shown in them; and, because they cannot be suspected of adapting their meaning to the exigences of these two verses. *Donnegan* says, "φωνή, ἦς, ἥ, a sound; voice, Herod. ii. 2. *a.* a word; or song; speech, language, iv. 114. *a.*" *Liddell and Scott* give these senses of φωνή: "I. A sound, tone, properly the sound of the voice, whether of men or of any animals with larynx and lungs. 1. Usually of men. Lat. *vox*, *voice*, esp. a loud clear voice, a cry as of battle. 2. The voice or cry of animals, as of swine, dogs, etc., of the nightingale. 3. Any articulate sound. II. The faculty of speech, discourse. 1. Lat. *Sermo*. 2. *Language*, *lingua*. 3. *A dialect*," etc.¹ Now, Dr. Davidson knew the various meanings of φωνή—and yet, relying upon the ignorance of a mere English reader, he conceals this, and then alleges that there is a contradiction at this place. But not only did he know from the common ordinary school dictionaries that there was this recognized distinction of meaning in the one word φωνή, he could hardly fail

¹ Some think that the distinction in the use of φωνή was marked by the case of the word which followed, and that whilst ἀκούειν φωνῆς signifies "to hear a voice," ἀκούειν φωνήν means to "understand a voice." This is probably the case, though it is uncertain whether the distinction was noted in this way.

to know that this was also stated by commentators and verbal critics. *Ammonius* (in *Catenâ*), as quoted by Wordsworth, says those who were with him heard the sound of the voice, but they heard not the words spoken, “οἱ δὲ συνόντες . . . τὸν ἦχον ἤκουον τῆς φωνῆς, οὐ μὲν συνῆκαν τὰ λεγόμενα.” And *Grotius* adds, “φωνὴν οὐκ ἤκουσαν, est vocem non intellexerunt.” They heard not the voice—that is, they understood not the voice; and Rosenmüller says, “Vox φωνῆ nunc significat sonum nunc sermonem sive verba distincta. Loco c. ix dicitur, illos audivisse sonum, in c. xxii dicitur, non intellexerunt sermonem loquentis mecum.” The word φωνῆ signifies both a sound and speech, or distinct words. In the ninth chapter it is said that they heard a sound, in the twenty-second that they heard not, that is, so as to understand the words of the speaker.

It is hard, it is impossible, to believe that Dr. Davidson did not know of this common distinction. His book shows that he is not so ignorant as this. But his knowing it, and yet suppressing this knowledge, and trusting to the ignorance of his readers, and stating that a contradiction exists which he knows does not exist, are so unaccountable, that whilst it would be wrong to pass this by, I point it out with reluctance and regret. I do it because it is one proof out of many that every means *per fas et nefas* is resorted to, to impugn the credit of Holy Scripture, and to shake the faith of men in the records of revelation—oftentimes, it is to be feared, with fatal effect.

10. Dr. Davidson then proceeds to enumerate “various particulars in the book” of *the Acts*, which in his opinion “are at variance with the Epistles.”¹ How far they are really at variance, any reader who will be at the trouble of comparing *the Acts* with the Epistles will be able to judge for himself. To me it seems that the alleged “variances” can only be admitted to exist by those who are prepared to deny the authenticity and genuineness of every existing historical record. In the first place, the critic tells us “that the historian was unaware” of the retirement of Saul to Arabia, directly after his conversion, and before his visit to Jerusa-

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 213.

lem.¹ But does it necessarily follow that St. Luke was not aware of this retirement to Arabia because he omits to mention it? Again, I would have the reader remark that this book is not a biography of certain Apostles, but a narrative of their *acts* in the work of preaching the Gospel, and of adding believers to the Church. But the retirement of St. Paul to Arabia does not necessarily come within the scope of the book. His retirement there was indeed a preparation for the work to which he was afterwards called, but it was no part of that work. The omission is therefore in keeping with the object and title of the book.

Nor can it be said truly that this omission in *the Acts* "disagrees with the Epistle to the Galatians."² A mere omission of a fact, which an historian considers, rightly or wrongly, not of importance sufficient to call for its insertion in his narrative of an event not immediately connected with the object which the writer has in view, cannot "disagree" with a statement made elsewhere. Dr. Davidson, however, considers that disagreement is shown, because in *the Acts of the Apostles* we read of Saul, that "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues;"³ whereas, the Apostle says in his Epistle to the Galatians, "immediately after his conversion he went to Arabia."⁴ But this is a mistake on the part of the objector; St. Paul nowhere says this, but the reverse. His words are, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem."⁵ Now, the object of the Apostle in this part of his Epistle to the Galatians is to show that he was "an Apostle, neither of men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ;" there is no word about his immediately going to Arabia, but that he did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, that is, with the Apostles at Jerusalem; and that so far from doing this, when he left Damascus, it was to go not to Jerusalem, but to Arabia; and that even then

¹ Acts ix. 26; xxvi. 20.

² Davidson, ii. p. 213.

³ Acts ix. 20.

⁴ Davidson, ii. p. 213.

⁵ Gal. i. 17, 18.

⁶ Gal. i. 1.

he returned to Damascus before he visited Peter and James at Jerusalem.¹ There is, then, nothing in the book of *the Acts* which directly, or by implication, is at "variance" with the statement of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians; for to make the word "immediate" refer to the going up to Jerusalem, is to do violence to the grammatical construction of the passage, and wholly to overlook the object of the Apostle in making this assertion.

11. Dr. Davidson then goes on to say, "According to the Acts, when Paul came from Damascus to Jerusalem, and the disciples there did not believe that he was a convert, a fact that must have been known at the metropolis if more than three years had elapsed since his conversion, Barnabas, brought him 'to the Apostles,' with whom he was associated for a time. This disagrees with the Epistle to the Galatians, which states that he went to Jerusalem 'to see Peter,' and saw none else there 'except James.' Paul's own account excludes John; that of the Acts includes him."² Let us note *first* how incidentally and undesignedly these words "they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple"³ receive their explanation from the fact mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, that though converted more than three years before, yet after he had declared the truth of his conversion to the people of Damascus, he had gone away "into Arabia;" so that the fact of his conversion might well be but little "known at the metropolis," and they who had seen him last "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,"⁴ and had been without proof of his conversion because of his three years' retirement into Arabia, might be excused, if at his coming again to Jerusalem "they were all afraid of him." But Dr. Davidson discovers another "variance" in the account of the visit of Paul to Jerusalem. He tells us, that the Apostle says that he only saw Peter and James, whereas, according to the Acts, he saw John also. There appears, however, to be some mistake as to this "variance."

¹ Gal. i. 18, 19.

² Davidson, ii. p. 213.

³ Acts ix. 26.

⁴ Acts ix. 1.

St. John is neither referred to in the Epistle to the Galatians nor in the book of *the Acts* in reference to any visit of St. Paul. Dr. Davidson has here probably trusted to some German critic, and has not verified his references. There is nothing which can account for this objection.

12. Another objection is stated in these words, "The story of the Acts says that Paul and Barnabas went up as deputies from the Church at Antioch; the Apostle himself, that he went up by a revelation."¹ There is no necessary variance between these two statements. St. Paul says, indeed, that he went up by "revelation," *κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν* :² in *the Acts* we read that the brethren at Antioch "determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and Elders about this question."³ Now, in interpreting a document, whether ancient or modern, whether secular or sacred, one rule ought in all fairness to be observed. Of two or more meanings of a word, that one must be affixed which is most in accordance with the context. We must not affix a possible meaning to a word or passage to the *exclusion* of other equally legitimate meanings, and then argue against the truth of a document because it is possible that the words divorced from their context may bear a meaning contradictory to the rest of the document. We have no right, for instance, in this passage to make St. Paul say that "a revelation" was made *to himself*, and then argue that the interpolated words are opposed to something which he has said elsewhere, and yet this is what Dr. Davidson has done. St. Paul does not say that the revelation was made *to himself*. He may have been deputed to go in consequence of a revelation made to the whole Church at Antioch by Agabus, or some other prophet ;⁴ or he may mean that the revelation was given to him that application should be made to the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, the choice of deputies still remaining with the Church at Antioch ; or, again, supposing that the revelation was made at the first to him, and that he went up in consequence, yet he may mean that the

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 215.

² Gal. ii. 2.

³ Acts xv. 2.

⁴ Acts xi. 27, 28.

sending "Barnabas and certain others with them" may have been the determination of the whole body of the brethren. I think that the first of these three meanings accords best with the narrative; any one, however, of these meanings may be that of the text as naturally as the one affixed by Dr. Davidson, seemingly because it is most "at variance" with the passage in the Galatians, and any of these suggested meanings are perfectly in accord with the words of St. Paul in his Epistle. Arbitrarily to select a meaning "at variance" with the context, or with some other document, and then to note that such meaning is "at variance," and therefore that the writer has asserted an untruth, is not criticism, but cavilling.

13. After this we are told that, whereas the Acts of the Apostles "speaks of a formal transaction, a public council held under the presidency of James, . . . the Galatian Epistle, on the other hand, speaks only of Paul having a private conference with the heads of the Jerusalem Church."¹ If this be so, there cannot by any possibility be a contradiction between the two books, the history and the Epistle, though it may be necessary to account for the silence of one or the other, or indeed of both these documents. This we can do at least only conjecturally, though I think a consideration of the character of the two writings will suggest a likely reason. Let the reader, then, remember that the object of the Apostle in this part of the Epistle to the Galatians was to vindicate his claim to an equality in the Apostolate, and to show that he was called by Christ to this work, and that he had like authority with the rest of the Apostles. The question of the council is not, therefore, immediately before the Apostle. It is not within the scope of his Epistle. The fact, then, that he should have omitted to speak of an incident, which, however intrinsically important, had yet no bearing on, nor relation to, his argument, is nothing wonderful. St. Paul mentions all that bears upon his claim to be the "Apostle not of men, neither by man,"² and what is irrelevant to this he passes by. This is but

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 216.

² Gal. i. 1.

natural, and what we should have expected to find him doing.¹

14. Dr. Davidson then says that "the decision of the council recognized the validity of the Law for Jewish Christians;" and he asks, "how could Paul have assented to that without opposition? One who affirmed 'if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,'² could not consistently approve of circumcision for Christians."³ The fallacy here is so transparent, that I am astonished the objection should have been urged. That a fallacy is involved seems to have been felt by the objector himself—I cannot otherwise account for the change of words in the two members of this one sentence. "Jewish Christians" in the first, appears as "Christians" merely in the second. St. Paul nowhere advocates the abolition of circumcision in the case of "Jewish Christians," but he says to the *Gentile* Christians that Christ shall profit them nothing, because of their submission to a rite not required of them. The decree of the council could not have led to "opposition" on the part of St. Paul, since it is in keeping with repeated acts and declarations of his. So long as the temple stood, and the Jewish polity remained, the Jewish Christians observed the law, and practised the ceremonial prescribed in the Mosaic ritual.

Another "variance" which Dr. Davidson discovers is thus described: "The Epistle to the Galatians says that the only thing which the Apostles recommended to Paul was, that he should remember the poor at Jerusalem," whereas the book of the *Acts* intimates that Paul "consented to the imposition of prohibitions on Gentile Christians," and that "he consented that the Gentile Christians should come under the command of abstinence from meat offered to idols, and fornication. Thus the decrees of the congress

¹ When, however, St. Paul says, that he had a private conference with "them which were of reputation," *Kar' idian de tois dokousi*, Gal. ii. 2, he *implies* that there was a public conference or council besides.—*Ebrard*.

"It is of no import whatever to the matter that in Acts the result is a public decree, whereas in Galatians

no mention of such a decree is made: the *History* relates that which was important for the Church; the *Epistles* that which cleared the Apostle personally from the charge of dependence on man: all mention of the decree would, in Galatians, have been irrelevant."—*Alford*.

² Gal. v. 2. ³ Davidson, ii. p. 217.

were ‘articles of peace:’ concessions were made on both sides;” and then follows a scandalous insinuation that St. Paul regarded fornication as a “matter of indifference,” or at least the critic says he gave a fair handle to his enemies for attributing to him “such indifference.”¹ And all this because Dr. Davidson cannot quote fairly. It is true that in his Epistle St. Paul does say that the Apostles at Jerusalem enjoined him to “remember the poor”² at Jerusalem, and he does use the word “only” with reference to this injunction; but how stands the whole passage? He, speaking not of the council, but of the “conference” of the Apostles with him and Barnabas as to the work of their ministry, not as to the questions on which the Church at Antioch requested a decision, says, “When James, Cephas, and John perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the circumcision;”³ and then he adds, “only they would that we should remember the poor,” i. e. the poor of Jerusalem; and St. Paul adds, “the same which I also was forward to do,” and this in *the Acts* we find notices of his continually doing.⁴ Nothing is here stated which has even the appearance of variance, we nowhere read that he gave way and allowed the council to send forth a decree against impurity, and that there was a “concession” on his side.

15. The various speeches recorded in *the Acts* are all rejected by Dr. Davidson as unhistoric; in one St. Peter speaks with the voice of St. Paul, in another St. Paul uses language which the critic thinks would have been more appropriate to St. Peter. Here the writer has interpolated the true, and there he has supplied a fictitious speech, and many of them present “certain ideas unsuitable to the speakers.” Some he thinks probably true, others wholly untrue, but Dr. Davidson gives no tests by which we may judge which are true and which are false, save the fanciful one of “the Pauline” and “the Petrine idea.” “Sometimes these speeches are arranged in an artificial method, through

¹ Davidson, ii. pp. 217—219.

² Gal. ii. 10.

³ Gal. ii. 9.

⁴ Acts xi. 29, 30; xxiv. 17; Rom. xv. 25—27; 1 Cor. xvi. 1—3.

which we may discern a purpose harmonizing with the leading object of the book,"¹ and they are therefore rejected. As it is impossible to reduce this formula under any acknowledged canon of criticism, and as the objector nowhere attempts to make it even probable, it is impossible to accept it, still less to apply it. As it grows out of what is called "the inner consciousness" of the critic, and does not arise from any induction of particulars, it must be left to the same "inner consciousness" to determine when to apply it, and when to abstain from its use. But as it is a purely fanciful test, it is of no value in determining critical or historical questions.

16. Occasionally the objection assumes a more precise form, and though I shall not attempt to traverse the whole field of objections, because to do so were as profitless as it would be wearisome to the reader, I will remark on the more important objections. Having said of the speeches that "their language is that of the supposed Luke, rather than of Peter or Paul,"² in confirmation of this opinion Dr. Davidson says that St. Peter, "addressing the assembled disciples, spake of his own mother tongue and that of his hearers as 'their proper tongue,'³ the Aramæan, and supposes that it was strange by adding the explanation in Greek."⁴ It has always been questioned by commentators whether the words by which the Hebrew "*Acaldana*" is interpreted are a part of St. Peter's speech, or an addition made by St. Luke. Probably it was inserted by the historian by way of explanation, as he elsewhere suspends his narrative to explain the topography of a place in order to be more intelligible to Theophilus. Such a procedure is common enough, and does not affect the authenticity of a speech any more than the accuracy of the report of a modern speech would be impugned because at the foot of the page, or within brackets in the text, a Latin quotation was translated. As brackets were not in use at that time, the insertion, if made, would appear as it now stands; and it may be fairly questioned, as it might be in the case

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 226.

³ Acts i. 19.

² *Ibid.*

⁴ Davidson, ii. p. 226.

supposed of a later quotation being translated, whether the explanation was made at the time by the speaker, or afterwards by the reporter of his speech. Whichever way the decision was given, the authenticity of the speech itself would in no way be affected:

Modern criticism claims the right of applying the same rule to Holy Scripture, which is used in testing the authenticity of a secular document, and the credibility of a secular writer, but it too frequently departs from this principle, and refuses to apply the same equitable rules in the one case as in the other.

17. The speech of St. Paul on Mars hill is rejected by Dr. Davidson for four distinct reasons, and with the consideration of these I quit this part of the subject. In the *first* place, he thinks that it is "highly artificial, and shows design in its structure."¹ In the *second* place, it introduces the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which St. Paul ought, according to the critic, to have kept in the background or even to have altogether omitted to mention, because it was new, and "revolting to the heathen." In the *third* place, one verse is not sufficiently "Pauline," and is, even in the judgment of the objector, "too prosaic and flat for the Apostle." In the *fourth* place, strangest objection of all, "the mind of Luke is more apparent than that of Paul," because of the use of words and phrases which occur, however, not "in the speech itself, but its surroundings;" that is, words and phrases used elsewhere by St. Luke occur in the introductory part to the narrative, which is confessedly by St. Luke, but not in the speech itself, which is affirmed to be by St. Paul. Surely no more significant fact could be adduced in support of the authenticity of the speech. And Dr. Davidson adds, still impugning the authenticity of the speech, "It must be confessed that the speech contains many peculiar expressions, there being no less than twenty-six words in vv. 19—34 which do not occur in Luke," and therefore—"the sentiments and facts of the language may be Paul's." I leave this last objection without further notice. It needs, in

¹ Davidson, ii. pp. 230—232.

truth, none. As to the *first* objection, that the speech betrays “art, and shows design in its structure,” this may be a reason for questioning the taste of an orator, it is not—it cannot be—any objection to the genuineness of his speech. What is meant by art, and design, Dr. Davidson does not say, and we are left to conjecture. Traces of the influence of the school of Tarsus they may be, but this were to be expected. Grace and the Apostolic commission did not reduce the intellect of St. Paul to a blank. His natural or acquired endowments were still his own possession, and he used them unsparingly. So far, however, from any excess of art or design appearing in this speech, there seems to me only nature and natural gifts inspired by the Spirit. “A city wholly given to idolatry,”¹ the message which he was commissioned to deliver to “all men everywhere to repent,” and the site on which he stood, seem sufficient to account for every word of the speech; and before any critic repeat these objections, let him stand on Mars hill, and restore in his imagination all the glories of the temples on his left hand, especially the Parthenon, matchless yet, though in ruins; let him recall the statues which adorned, to lavishness, the ground around the Pynx, and the Bema before him; let him summon before him the frivolous crowd of the sharp-witted Greeks of his day, let him take note of the zeal of St. Paul; and then, looking out upon “the violet waves” of the *Ægean*, and drawing inspiration—and the intellect is sluggish which does not—from the glorious scenery of earth and sea, and the cloudless vault overhead, and the golden light, and the quickening heat of the atmosphere, and the perfume stealing from the thymy *Hymettus*, and the olive groves of *Academia* behind him, let him read this speech, and the coldest and the dullest critic will dream no more of art and design. Given the audience to whom these words were spoken, the speaker by whom they were uttered, and the message to be delivered, all is simple and natural. But if still Dr. Davidson thinks that he detects “art and design” in the speech, let him say whether the speeches of Demos-

¹ Acts xvii. 16.

thenes and Cicero, of Burke and of Bossuet, do not betray the same characteristics, and yet no one considers that the presence of intellect detracts anything from the evidence in support of the authenticity of these speeches.

The *second* objection is, "It is not easy to see how he could have proceeded so abruptly to the doctrine of the resurrection—a topic that must have been revolting to his hearers—consistently with the wise adaptation he uniformly practised. He must have known that the idea of a resurrection from the dead would be an effectual barrier to the reception of Christianity on the part of his hearers as it proved to be."¹ How persons could have received Christianity and yet have no "idea of a resurrection from the dead" we are not told. It seems a contradiction in terms. Christianity is based on this truth; this doctrine, that Christ rose from the dead, and that all men will rise with their bodies, lies at the very foundation of Christianity. St. Paul terms this very doctrine "the Gospel,"² as summing up and completing the whole circle of Divine truth made known in Christ. To this doctrine he always recurs in his speeches: in his epistles he sets forth "the resurrection of the dead,"³ often in the opening words of his letter: how much this truth was ever present to his mind we gather from that chapter with which the Church still comforts all mourners at the brink of the grave,⁴ and so intent was he in preaching this truth, that "the hope and resurrection of the dead"⁵ was that of which he was "called in question," and which led to his being sent captive to Rome. It is almost as impossible to conceive of St. Paul as it is to conceive of Christianity, and not find this great and distinguishing truth everywhere prominent. Nor did the commission of St. Paul to go forth and preach Christ permit of his holding back any truth, especially such a truth, because it was "revolting to his hearers." He had to preach Christ, and not to please men.

The *third* objection to the authenticity of this speech is

¹ Davidson, ii. pp. 230, 231.

⁴ 1 Thess. i. 10.

² 1 Cor. xv. 1.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv.

³ Rom. i. 4; Gal. i. 1; Ephes. i. 20.

⁶ Acts xxiii. 6.

this, that "The view of Christ presented in the thirty-first verse is scarcely Pauline. It has indeed a certain analogy to Rom. i. 4, as Dr. Wetste observes; but it is still too prosaic and flat for the Apostle."¹ This is purely matter of taste, and one which may afford exercise for the critical judgment. I content myself with giving the incriminated verse, merely noticing that this latter objection is hardly consistent with the objection first stated. For if this doctrine were "revolting to the hearers," it might or might not have been prudent in a worldly sense for St. Paul to advance it, but it could not be "flat," and hardly indeed "prosaic," which is generally used to distinguish that which is at least commonplace. The verse is, "Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." It seems from the context that what Dr. Davidson means is, not that the words or style is "flat and prosaic," but that the doctrines of a general judgment and of the resurrection of the body are "flat and prosaic," which, however, they cannot be save to one who does not believe in either.

18. Passing over such objections as this, that there was no such thing as "the Nazarite vow," and that the whole account of the shaving of his head and of the visit of St. Paul to the temple² is "imaginary" and "unhistorical," for which conclusion Dr. Davidson as usual gives no authority—and also such remarks as, "it is impossible to make out a consistent or definite picture" of the disciples of John the Baptist, because they are "depicted so anonymously,"³ whatever that may mean, and though many "particulars may be true, but the way in which they are related, and the purpose they are intended to serve, awaken doubt,"⁴ as needing no reply, and serving only to exhibit the unfairness and the prejudices of the writer, I shall conclude with the mention of an objection advanced against the narrative

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 231.

³ Davidson, ii. p. 254.

² Acts xix. 1—12; xxi. 17—29.

⁴ Ibid. p. 255.

of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome in the last chapter of *the Acts*.

We are told that "the narrative in Acts xxviii. 17, etc., does not consist with what we know of the Church of Rome from Paul's Epistle to it. Three days after the Apostle's arrival in that city he called the chief Jews together and told them his position, saying that he had nothing to accuse his nation of, and had therefore sent for them to explain the circumstances in which he was placed." In their reply, "they expressed a desire to hear his sentiments: for they knew that the sect he belonged to was everywhere spoken against. . . The Epistle to the Romans shows that an important Church had existed there for several years. . . How then could the Jewish elders at Rome say with truth, that they knew little or nothing about the Christian Church or its tenets?"¹ Now it will probably be thought a sufficient answer to this objection of Dr. Davidson's if I remark that there is no one word in *the Acts of the Apostles* which states or implies that the "Jewish elders at Rome . . . knew little or nothing about the Christian Church or its tenets."² We have here another painful instance, either of the critic's inacquaintance with the book which he professes to review, or of his hastiness in making objections without due examination. For not only did not "the chief of the Jews" make any such statement as that which Dr. Davidson has put into their mouths — at least, we have no record in *the Acts of the Apostles* or indeed elsewhere of any such statement made by them—but the whole tenor of their conversation with St. Paul is directly opposed to such a supposition. What were the facts? In the midst of Judaism a body of men had suddenly arose professing and practising a more austere morality than was common.³ These men believed,

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 224.

² Acts xxviii. 21.

³ "Les fidèles de Jésus devaient d'ailleurs passer pour des dévots très-exacts; car ils observaient encore les pratiques juives avec scrupule, priant aux heures voulues et observant tous

les préceptes de la Loi. C'étaient des juifs, ne différant des autres qu'en ce qu'ils croyaient le Messie déjà venu. Les gens qui n'étaient pas au courant de ce qui les concernait (et c'était l'immense majorité) les regardaient comme une secte de *hasidim* ou gens pieux. On

moreover, that the Messiah predicted in the ritual of the temple and by the prophets, and longed for by so many, had now come. They professed their faith in one who at the great feast of the Passover, in the sight of Jews from Rome and other parts of the Roman world, had been crucified at Jerusalem. Under these circumstances we might, without any special information, have felt sure that the "elders" of the people¹ would know something of the new faith. Accordingly the words of "the chief of the Jews," "concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against," imply that discussion had arisen and charges been made against the Christians at Rome, in the midst of which it would have been impossible for persons so interested by natural zeal as well as by official position in the well-being of the Jewish Church to "say with truth that they knew little or nothing about it." They say that they had heard it reviled. We know that the faith and endurance of the members of the new belief were largely commended. In this conflict of opinions it would have been natural for the "elders" at Rome to desire to know the mind of one who had so recently come from Judæa, and to be informed how far he agreed with, or differed from, the estimate of this despised sect. This we are told they did, and the whole account is consistent with probability, with experience, and with every word in the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles.²

Objections which take their rise out of the depths of the critic's inner self-consciousness, which are based on *a priori*

n'était ni schismatique ni hérétique pour s'affilier à eux, pas plus qu'on ne cesse d'être protestant pour être disciple de Spener, ou catholique pour être de l'ordre de Saint-François ou de Saint-Bruno."—*Renan Les Apôtres*, pp. 80, 81. This was doubtless the outward aspect of the Christian body at this time. See *Ebrard's Gospel History*, p. 520.

¹ Acts xxviii. 17—*τοὺς ὄντας τῶν Ἰουδαίων πρῶτους*.

² "Supposing that at that time there were no Christians in Rome who were known to the Jews, these elders would not

have spoken of *this sect* as soon as Paul mentioned the hope of Israel. The expression shows that they were already acquainted with *this sect* as one which had to do with the hope of Israel. They did not expect to receive the first account of *this sect* from Paul, but were simply interested in discussing it with him because they heard on every hand both of the progress it was making and the opposition it excited; and therefore regarded the question as one well worth their while to inquire still further about."—*Ebrard's Gospel History*, p. 518.

conceptions of what an Apostle ought to have done or said, the topics he ought to have insisted upon, and the topics which in prudence he should have suppressed, the mode in which his ideas should have been unfolded, the amount and degree of warmth which he should have felt and expressed, and the kind of taste which he should have displayed in making known his Master's message, are hardly robust enough to come within the province of criticism, and are as incapable of being substantiated as they are of being refuted. When the vague and vapoury notions about "Petrine," and "Pauline," and "Johannine ideas," have assumed some shape and can be grasped by the intellect of man, they may then be compelled to submit to examination, and be adopted or rejected: until then this kind of idle talk may perhaps savour of "the higher criticism," but it is certainly very unprofitable and childish, as fanciful as day-dreams of enchanted castles and flying dragons, which children see in the clouds which gather around the sun at its setting. They are more baseless than these, they are absolutely irrational. To suppose that a mighty impassioned man like St. Paul, at one time "breathing out threatenings and slaughter"¹ from his ardent soul, and when converted to the faith of Christ "stirred within"² at the bare sight of a people with whose intellect he sympathized, but whose moral corruption he deplored because they were "given over to idolatry;" to suppose such a soul, on fire with zeal to make known the Gospel "committed to his charge," and to set forth "the power of Christ's resurrection," should in all his actions and all his sayings conform to the preconceived theories of unimpassioned library critics, that his feet should march in the same well-beaten paths which those tread who believe none of the truths which filled his whole soul, and nerved his mental powers, is so utterly unreasonable, so preposterously absurd, that the mind is hardly able to believe that such grotesque criticism could become articulate, and be able to clothe itself with the language of man.

But though the task of marshalling these objections

¹ Acts ix. 1.

² Acts xvii. 16.

has been a wearisome one, and the mind has become impatient at the childish cavils which I have attempted to state—for to state them has been to answer them—yet the labour has not been without benefit to myself, and may be of profit to the reader. The feebleness of such objections is a strong, perhaps the strongest, evidence which we can have of the genuineness and authenticity of this book of Holy Scripture. If the preternatural acuteness of minds that have sought out difficulties, and objections, and “variances” in God’s word have found what they sought—for terribly true are the words in this respect as in others, “Seek and ye shall find,”—and if the finding has been such only as I have collected and displayed, how unassailable must be that word, how mighty must be the evidence of its truth, which cannot in any way be gainsaid. There is, as might be expected, no book of man which has been submitted to such an ordeal. No writing of any secular historian has been ever subjected to so many tests, and the result of all this scrutiny is—that which Dr. Davidson has brought together. To me it seems that this failure to impugn the veracity of the writer, is the strongest evidence of the authenticity of the history contained in *the Acts of the Apostles*, stronger even than that ample evidence which is afforded by the direct internal and external evidence in its favour.

CHAPTER III.—SECTION I.

THE OBJECT OF 'THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.'

ONE reason why such objections as those mentioned in the previous chapter have seemed at any time plausible, arises from mistakes as to the object of the book itself. One modern writer thinks that the object of St. Luke in writing *the Acts*, was to enhance the reputation of the Blessed Virgin, who, however, is once and only once named, and that incidentally.¹ According to Baur,² the Acts of the Apostles, like the Gospels, is mythological, not historical; or at best an historical romance, written by a partisan of St. Paul in support of his claims, wholly imaginary, in opposition to those of St. Peter,³ which are equally imaginary. This outrageous theory has no support in anything external to the volume itself, and it is contradicted by the whole tenor and arrangement of this book of the Acts.

Had it been the object of the writer to do what Baur suggests, some notice would have been taken of the reproof of St. Paul when he withstood St. Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed.⁴ On this head it will be sufficient to cite the testimony of Dr. Davidson, who in modified language accepts Baur's theory. Noticing other omissions, which he thinks should not have occurred in this history, he says, "In like manner Peter's appearance at Antioch, and public rebuke there, are unnoticed. It is impossible to suppose that this silence is other than intentional."⁵ But if the omission of this incident were "intentional,"

¹ "On sent déjà chez Luc une tendance à grandir le rôle de Marie. Luc, chap. i. et ii."—*Renan Les Apôtres*, p. 49, note.

² Tubing. Zeitschrift, 1836.

³ Olshausen.

⁴ Gal. i. 11.

⁵ Davidson, ii. p. 243.

it could only have been passed over out of consideration to St. Peter, not out of regard to St. Paul. If, again, the object of the writer of a "mythological" book, who therefore was not fettered by any consideration of historical truth, had been to raise the reputation of St. Paul at the expense of St. Peter, he would scarcely have dwelt in the beginning of the book upon the actions, or have recorded at length the speeches, and detailed the miracles wrought by St. Peter. The writer attributes the commencement of the gathering in of the Gentiles, not to St. Paul, to whom it might seem fittingly to have belonged, but to St. Peter. The first recorded miracle done by means of the Apostles was wrought by St. Peter and St. John. It was the shadow of Peter that had healing power to those who sought a cure in faith. It was, according to Dr. Davidson, "the miraculous instantaneous effect of Peter's words" which struck Ananias and Sapphira with death. It was at the supplication of St. Peter that Tabitha was raised from the dead. The same Apostle was delivered out of prison when Herod was about to slay him. Now, if none of these things were true, if they are all "mythological," how is it that a writer, whose object was to place St. Paul above St. Peter, should have invented these incidents, or, what is still more strangely at variance with Baur's theory, why should he have given to common incidents a supernatural colouring, increasing necessarily the reputation of an Apostle whom, according to this writer, it is his whole object to place in the back-ground?

But not only has the writer of *the Acts of the Apostles* detailed these actions of an Apostle whom it was his object to set aside; he passes by actions and sufferings of St. Paul which, had he detailed them, would have enhanced the reputation of this Apostle. We have not in *the Acts of the Apostles* a single word about the journey of St. Paul to Spain, of which St. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xv. 24),¹ and of which, whether he made it or no, a mythological panegyrist would have surely interwoven some account in the pages of his romance. Clemens Romanus, indeed, assures us that the Apostle did carry out

¹ Davidson, ii. p. 209.

his intention as to this journey,¹ yet neither of this nor of his sufferings at Rome have we any notice.

Again, of how small a portion of the trials and perils and persecutions, which from St. Paul himself we know befell him, is noticed in this book, which yet, according to this theory, was written to increase the reputation of, and augment our admiration for, St. Paul, and to prevent the partisans of St. Peter from supporting the greater claims of their Apostle. How little we learn of the "stripes above measure;" of his shipwrecks only one is noticed (Acts xxvii.), whereas he says, "thrice I suffered shipwreck;" how few details have we of his "journeyings often;" not a trace of the "perils of robbers" (2 Cor. xi. 23—27); and yet these and abundance of other sufferings were the lot of St. Paul, all omitted, however, by a writer whose pen we are assured was moved by a desire to record everything to the credit of St. Paul.

Again, had this book been intended for any such purpose as Baur has imagined, the writer would naturally have preserved for us some details of the "visions and revelations of the Lord" given to His servant, and we should have known something of those "unspeakable words" which he heard (2 Cor. xii. 1—4); and if he had not altogether omitted the part taken by St. Paul in the death of Stephen, and of his persecution directed against "the saints" at Jerusalem, and of his purpose to persecute to the death those at Damascus also (Acts xxvi. 10—12), yet some word of apology would have been inserted in the simple narrative of his furious efforts at stamping out the Church of Christ, some softer features would have relieved the record of Saul's violence, had the object of the writer been, as Baur imagines, to advance the reputation and increase the authority of St. Paul.

The suggestion of any such motive for writing *the Acts of the Apostles* could only be made by one utterly unable to

¹ Clemens Romanus in his First Epistle (§ 5) says, that St. Paul came to "the extreme limit of the west," that is, west of Rome, where the Gospel was written. A Roman would not call his own city "the extreme limit of

the west;" and these words would have no meaning unless Gaul, or Spain, at least were meant, and since we know that St. Paul intended to go to Spain, this is most probably the place referred to by St. Clement.

weigh evidence, and to consider probabilities. Its futility is evident upon the slightest consideration. It would be a far more plausible supposition that St. Luke, or whoever else was the writer, passed over incidents in St. Paul's life of labour in order to diminish his reputation. But, in truth, all such suggestions can only be made by those who put out of sight the simple object which seems to have been in St. Luke's mind when he wrote this narrative.

Setting aside, then, these purely fanciful conjectures, and gathering the object of *the Acts* merely from what we find recorded in them, the purpose of the writer was evidently to narrate the work of Christ continued after His ascension, and wrought "through the Holy Ghost,"¹ and to furnish his readers with an account of how Christianity, after the death of its Founder, was preserved, established, and in so short time communicated to many nations.² In it St. Luke tells us how the work of Christ, "begun" during His incarnate life, was fulfilled by those to whom He had given of His Spirit for this end. His various prophecies were accomplished by His Apostles in the mighty works done by them. He had said, "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works shall he do, because I go unto My Father."³ He had promised that when they spake "the Spirit of your Father" shall speak "in you;"⁴ and that He would give to them "a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist;"⁵ and in accordance with and reference to this prediction, St. Luke tells us of St. Stephen—"they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spake."⁶ Again, when we are told in *the Acts* that "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,"⁷ we are at once reminded of the prediction of the Baptist, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."⁸ When Christ declared to His Apostles that when the Holy Ghost was sent He should "reprove the

¹ Acts i. 2.

³ John xiv. 12.

⁴ Matt. x. 20.

² Hug's Introduction to the Writings of the New Testament, vol. ii. p. 310.

⁵ Luke xxi. 15.

⁶ Acts vi. 10.

⁷ Acts ii. 3.

⁸ Matt. iii. 11.

world of sin, because they believe not on Me,"¹ and when, at the preaching of Peter, after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, we read that those of the world who had not believed in Him, but who had rejected and crucified Him, were now "pricked in their hearts,"² and did repent and become His disciples, we have the prediction and the sure fulfilment of His word.³ And as a great part of this object of tracing the fulfilment of the promises of Christ to His Apostles, the writer dwells at length on all the circumstances of the admission of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ, the "one fold,"⁴ into which all His were to be gathered in.

The Acts of the Apostles is not then a biography of the Apostles at large, nor indeed is it a narrative of the acts of the whole of them, so far as they showed forth the power of Christ, and influenced the conversion of the Roman world—the only "world" known to the writer; nor is it the biography or actions of the two Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, whose labours were so largely blessed in that conversion; it is only a record of those actions of the Apostles which illustrated Christ's purpose and the fulfilment of His promise in the conversion of the Gentile world, so far as the gospel message had been made known to them up to the time of the imprisonment of St. Paul at Rome. There might indeed, as it has been suggested, have been an additional reason for dwelling almost exclusively on the work done by these two, because both of them according to the usual Church tradition, and St. Paul also according to the testimony of Scripture, were well known to the Church at Rome for their labours; and, therefore, to Theophilus, who most probably was a Roman citizen.⁵

The subject of *the Acts of the Apostles* then is the work of the Holy Spirit, as exhibited in the growth of the Christian Church, and in the calling in of the Gentiles to be partakers with the Jews in all the promises made of old to Abraham. As in the Gospels we have seen the grain of

¹ John xvi. 9.

² Acts ii. 37.

³ Whithy.

⁵ Olshausen.

⁴ John x.

wheat falling into the earth and dying, in *the Acts* we have it represented—for the Church is the body of Christ—springing up and bearing fruit abundantly, spreading into all parts of the world, and enriching human nature with the gifts of Divine grace.¹ As in the Gospels the human means are not brought into prominence in order surely that our attention should not be diverted from the central figure, our Incarnate Lord, so in *the Acts* it is not man that is foremost in the writer's mind, but the work which by man was wrought through the power of the Holy Ghost; the deeds, or *πράξεις*, which He enabled the Apostles of Christ to accomplish, and which, though done by man's instrumentality, were yet done by God, for “neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”²

SECTION II.

DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF ‘THE ACTS.’

ALL commentators recognize a break or division of *the Acts of the Apostles* at the end of the twelfth chapter; up to that point the history is taken up with the preaching and Acts of St. Peter and St. John, the death of Stephen, and the mission of Philip, the Evangelist, to Samaria. From that point the history is entirely occupied with the acts and mission of St. Paul. Others of the Apostles travelled to the extremities or beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire. In the great province of Egypt, the gospel was preached, at least as a “witness,”³ to the people, and this, according to Church history, was the work of St. Mark, “sister’s son” of Barnabas, and the disciple of St. Peter;⁴ this and the introduction of the gospel into

¹ Gasp. Sanchez in Comment. in Act. Apost. Pref. p. 1.

⁴ Vide Renaudot, Hist. Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum Jacobitarum, pp. 1—12.

² 1 Cor. iii. 7. ³ Matt. xxiv. 14.

Armenia, Arabia, and other neighbouring regions is passed over, and the attention of the reader is fixed on the ingathering of the Gentiles, and their incorporation into the same body as the Jewish converts, of which a perfect picture is given in the result of St. Paul's labours. The reason for the omission of all mention of the acts of St. John and of the rest of the twelve, may be that St. Luke only records those facts of which he himself was an eye-witness, or which he learnt from those who were the eye-witnesses and actors in the history which he has written.¹

According to this view of the contents of *the Acts of the Apostles*, the book naturally divides itself into two parts. Dr. Benson,² however, prefers a threefold division. The first including chapters one to ten, in which the history is confined to events which took place in Jerusalem, Judæa, and Samaria; the second including chapters ten to thirteen, in which the proselytes of the gate or devout Gentiles were admitted; the third including chapters thirteen to the end of the book, in which converts were gathered from the Gentile world, though these converts had not become in any way members of the Jewish Church. It might perhaps be a preferable division, if, taking as our guide our Lord's promise to the Apostles, "ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the world,"³ we were to mark the division of the history thus: (1) Chapters i. to vii. inclusive, during which the work of the Apostles was entirely, so far as *the Acts* give us any indication, confined to the city of Jerusalem, and to the native and Hellenistic Jews congregated there. (2) Chapters viii. to xii. inclusive, in which we have the extension of the Church to "all Judea and in Samaria" related. (3) Chapters xiii. to xxviii. inclusive, in which we have related the mission of St. Paul to the Gentiles, and to the Jews scattered throughout the Roman world, and dwelling in the midst of heathenism.

¹ J. B. Michaelis, Introduction to the New Testament, vol. iii. part 1, ch. 7, § 2. Whitby, Preface to Commentary on the Acts.

² Dr. Benson, Introduction to History of the Planting of the Christian Religion, § 6.

³ Acts i. 8.

From whatever point we regard the history, there is then a division as to the subject matter at the end of the twelfth chapter; it will therefore be convenient to conclude the first volume of this Commentary at that place, reserving for the second volume the chapters which detail the labours, and preachings, and sufferings of the great Apostle, whose mission was to set forth the oneness of all men in Christ, by gathering them all, whether Hebrews or not, into the "one fold," and thus practically to show that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit;"¹ and have been brought into that Church "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all."²

SECTION III.

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS.

ALL that is needed as an outline of the contents of the *Acts of the Apostles*, is a brief summary of the contents of the several chapters. (i.) After the Lord had given His last commands to His Apostles, He ascended into Heaven. The Apostles returning to Jerusalem fill up the place of Judas. (ii.) At the feast of Pentecost, according to the promise of Christ, the Holy Spirit is given. Then follows the effects of this gift—the astonishment of the multitude at the signs which followed—Peter's first discourse to the people, in which he points out the fulfilment of prophecy in this communication of the Holy Ghost. The influence of this gift upon his hearers—the increased respect for the Apostles, and condition of the Christian community at Jerusalem. (iii.) The cure of the lame man at the gate of

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

² Col. iii. 11.

the temple by Peter and John—the astonishment of the people—Peter's declaration that Christ, not man, was the worker of the miracle. The coming of the chief of the temple, who seeing the commotion and listening to the speaker, commits him to prison, together with St. John. (iv.) The assembly of the Sanhedrim on the following day—the two Apostles brought before the council—Peter with boldness makes his defence, whereat the Sanhedrim liberate Peter and John, under injunction no more to preach Jesus and the resurrection, and the Apostles return to the brethren, who receive them with joy. The large charity of the Christian converts, and their bounty to all who needed. (v.) The hypocrisy and fraud of Ananias and Sapphira—cures wrought by means of the Apostles—the perplexity of the Sanhedrim on account of the growth of the Church—the Apostles again seized and thrown into prison, but delivered by an angel—their preaching publicly in the temple—their apprehension when they are brought before the Sanhedrim—their defence—the advice of Gamaliel, in consequence of which the Apostles are set free, but punished—their continued teaching in the temple. (vi.) The Hellenistic Jews complain of the neglect of their widows—special ministers appointed to remedy this—St. Stephen one of these—his zeal in preaching—his apprehension. (vii.) His speech before the Sanhedrim, and violent death. (viii.) Persecution of the Church, and the scattering of many of the disciples—Philip teaches in Samaria—many are added to the Church—Simon Magus—the mission of Peter and John to confirm the newly converted—Philip on his way to Gaza meets the treasurer of Candace—instructs him in the doctrines of Christ, and then baptizes him. (ix.) Saul's zeal in persecuting the Church—his journey to Damascus, in order to extinguish the Church there—his conversion near Damascus—declares Christ in the synagogues—flies—returns to Damascus—goes up to Jerusalem, and from there to Tarsus—Peter visits the brethren at Lydda—cures Æneas of his lameness—visits Joppa—raises Tabitha from the dead—remains for a time at Joppa. (x.) Vision of St. Peter—invitation from Cornelius—gift of the Holy Ghost to the Gentile Cornelius—Peter baptizes

him and his household. (xi.) Peter returns to Jerusalem—his explanation of the baptism to the brethren—their joy at the gathering in of the Gentiles—the establishment of the Church at Antioch—the sending forth of Barnabas to Antioch—He seeks Saul, who joins him in his work at Antioch—Agabus predicts the famine at Jerusalem—Barnabas and Saul sent thither with alms. (xii.) Herod puts James the elder to death—casts Peter into prison—Peter miraculously delivered from prison—death of Herod Agrippa—Barnabas and Saul leave Jerusalem. (xiii.) The Church at Antioch—Barnabas and Saul ordained to preach the gospel in foreign lands—visit Cyprus—Elymas the sorcerer—his blindness—they leave Cyprus and visit Perga, and then to Antioch in Pisidia—Paul's speech in the synagogue—indignation of the Jews at it—persecution of Paul and Barnabas—departure to Iconium. (xiv.) Residence in Iconium—visit to Lystra and Derbe—cure of the lame man by Paul—people, at sight of miracle, would have sacrificed to them as gods—Jews stir up the people against them—stoning of Paul—departure—ordination of elders—Antioch in Syria, their residence there. (xv.) Church at Antioch disturbed with questions as to the observance of the Mosaic ritual—mission of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for decision of Apostles—council at Jerusalem—the resolution of the council—return of Paul and Barnabas with decision of the council—parting of Paul and Barnabas—Paul's mission through Syria. (xvi.) Timothy joins Paul at Lystra—they visit Phrygia and Galatia—vision and departure of Paul to Macedonia, together with Timothy and Luke—together they visit Philippi—Paul cast into prison with Silas—an earthquake—jailer releases them from their fetters—magistrates release them from prison—departure. (xvii.) Travels of Paul and companions through Macedonia to Athens—his speech before the Areopagus—conversion of Dionysius, and others—departure from Athens. (xviii.) Visit to Corinth—His residence there—departure for Ephesus. (xix.) Residence at Ephesus—public teaching there—invitation of Jews—commotion of worshippers of Diana. (xx.) Mission through Macedonia and Greece—departure to Asia—death of Euty-

chus—he is raised from the dead—Paul takes leave of elders and Church of Ephesus. (xxi.) Voyage to Jerusalem—uproar in the temple—mob beat Paul, who is rescued by Roman guard. (xxii.) Paul's speech to the people from the castle stairs—Paul bound in order to be beaten by the guard—terror at finding that he is a Roman citizen—Paul brought before the Jewish council. (xxiii.) Speech before the council—conspiracy to assassinate Paul—sent to Cæsarea. (xxiv.) Examination before Felix—imprisonment of Paul—Festus. (xxv.) Appeal of Paul from tribunal at Cæsarea to judgment of Cæsar. (xxvi.) Speech before Agrippa the younger. (xxvii.) Voyage of Paul from Cæsarea to Rome—shipwreck at Malta. (xxviii.) Prisoners reach the land—the viper on Paul's arm—miracle of healing father of Publius—departure for Rome—brethren meet him, and conduct him to that city—visit from chief men of the Jews—his imprisonment for two years in his own hired house at Rome.

SECTION IV.

CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES, AS IN 'THE ACTS.'

CHRISTIANITY, the life of Christ in the soul of man, is not an assemblage of Christian virtues united by a ruling and guiding principle of action, but a Divine gift hidden within, pervading the whole nature of man, and conforming it to the likeness of Christ, and manifesting its Divine origin by the works of righteousness and holiness which the Christian is able to do. It is, to use the significant Scriptural figure, "seed" shooting forth from within and bearing fruit outwardly.¹ In like manner the Church of Christ is not an aggregation of units, each complete in itself, but the result of the diffusion of Divine grace within, a body complete by virtue of the unity from which it springs. We read

¹ Matt. iv. 26—28.

of no beginning of the Church, but we are told of multitudes added to the already existing Church, which was established from the moment when on the cross Christ declared, "it is finished;" as the ministry of that Church was complete in all its parts when Christ breathed upon His Apostles and sent them forth to disciple all people.¹

The parables under which our Lord prefigured the Church were that of "seed" cast into the field, the world, sown oftentimes unseen, and then springing up and bearing fruit a hundredfold:² a grain of mustard-seed, insignificant in its smallness, growing noiselessly for a while, and unnoted by man:³ or, again, "leaven," pervading the whole mass, and transfusing its energy throughout the whole of the meal into which it had been cast, "till the whole was leavened."⁴ These figures prove themselves to be realities in the history of the conversion of the Gentile nations. In every instance of the conversion of a city or people to the faith in Christ, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the first agent is unknown, or at least unnamed, unless Samaria be thought an exception, and here "the fields" were "white unto the harvest"⁵ before Philip went from Jerusalem,⁶ and the people had been prepared to accept the gospel message by the preaching of Christ Himself, the Eternal Word. Rome had its congregations of Christians, whose "faith" was "spoken of throughout the whole" Roman "world,"⁷ before St. Paul or St. Peter had set foot within that city, and Italy could boast of its churches, as at Puteoli, before the Apostle of the Gentiles was known by face to them.⁸ Antioch, the third city within the Roman empire, had its "prophets and teachers" before there "came prophets from Jerusalem" to warn the disciples of the coming famine.⁹ Of the introduction of Christianity into Alexandria, the second city of importance in the empire, we have not one word of assured history. When St. Paul entered the gates of Damascus, there was already a con-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Matt. xiii. 3—8, 18—23.

³ Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

⁴ Matt. xiii. 33, 34.

⁵ John iv. 35.

⁶ Acts viii. 5.

⁷ Rom. i. 8.

⁸ Acts xxviii. 13.

⁹ Acts xi. 27—29; xiii. 1.

siderable body of Christians there, and Ananias was one of the teachers of the Church in that city.¹ Converts from Cyprus had made known the gospel to other regions before St. Paul and St. Barnabas set out on their mission to that island;² and Crete had its congregation of Christians, its presbyters and deacons, before Titus was left there by St. Paul, not to make known the truth in Christ, but to "set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city;"³ a task which implied that the faith had taken deep root there, and that the Church in its growth needed the eye of the Bishop rather than the zeal of the Evangelist. In its beginning, as well as in its after-growth and preservation, the Church of Christ was to bear this mark, that it was "not of men, neither by man,"⁴ so that the praise might the more clearly be, "not of men, but of God."⁵

In his defence of himself before King Agrippa, in answer to a taunt of Festus, St. Paul declared that he spake "freely," because he was "persuaded that none" of the facts in the incarnate life of Christ were "hidden from" the King, "for," he adds, "this thing was not done in a corner."⁶ In keeping with the notoriety of the events in His life, the sufferings which He endured, and the miracles which He wrought, the gospel of Christ was preached more sedulously by St. Paul and the rest of the Apostles in the chief cities of the empire, than in the smaller towns and in the country places. The cities where the throng of men was the greatest, the seats of an influence which extended to the region around, were the centres from which the Christian faith was to radiate to all about. Of these, Jerusalem was the centre of greatest influence, greater far than that which Athens or Rome exerted upon the minds of men. To this city the whole Jewish race and the numerous proselytes to Judaism turned their eyes. To this city "the tribes went up"⁷ in large numbers yearly, at one or other of the great national and religious feasts. Accordingly, Christ commanded His Apostles to make it for a while their

¹ Acts x. 10, 19.² Acts xi. 19, 20.³ Tit. i. 5.⁴ Galat. i. 1.⁶ Acts xxvi. 26.⁵ Rom. ii. 29.⁷ Ps. cxxii. 4.

residence. Not that this prevented their going out "as it were a Sabbath day's journey" into Samaria and Galilee and the region about Jerusalem, but that, in obedience to this command, they made Jerusalem their fixed abode,¹ the place to which they returned after their brief missions into the surrounding country. Antioch, according to Church history, was for a time presided over by St. Peter, and it is clear from the references to this city in the Acts of the Apostles, that it had a large body of ministers.² At Ephesus St. Paul abode upwards of two years at one time, teaching at first in the synagogue, and afterwards "disputed daily in the school of one Tyrannus,"³ sending out as occasion required, and opportunities offered, those who "ministered unto him" in the lower grades of the ministry.⁴ At Corinth he continued "a year and six months,"⁵ as long time as he devoted to "Syria and Cilicia, Derbe and Lystra, Phrygia and Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens;"⁶ Corinth being influential from its extensive commerce, its commanding position with reference both to Attica and Italy, its mixed population, and the large number of strangers who made it their temporary home. From these centres of population and power, the Apostles sent forth missions on all sides, until at the close of the Apostolic æra, the whole Roman world, both Romans and barbarians, had heard the gospel, and in large numbers professed the faith.

This fact is important for another reason. It was in these great cities, and not in corners of the earth, and in remote villages, that the great miracles which brought conviction to the minds of many who witnessed them were wrought by the hands of the Apostles. It was at Jerusalem, in the midst of the vast crowd which had come up from all parts to the feast of Pentecost, that "many signs and wonders" were done by the Apostles.⁷ Here it was the well-known beggar, who had long supplicated for alms from the crowds which passed through the Beautiful gate of the temple, was healed by Peter and John;⁸ and in the presence of the

¹ Acts i. 4.

² Acts xiii. 1.

³ Blunt's History of the Christian

⁴ Acts xix. 8, 9.

⁵ Acts xix. 21.

Church, ch. 3.

⁶ Acts xviii. 11.

⁷ Acts ii. 43.

⁸ Acts iii. 2.

multitude the sin of Ananias and Sapphira received its punishment, so that "great fear came upon . . . as many as heard these things."¹ Here were "many signs and wonders wrought among the people," so that, as a result, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."² It was in the capital city of Samaria, that Simon Magus as well as the people of Samaria "wondered, beholding the signs and wonders which were done"³ by the hand of Philip. At Damascus, the large population of that city, Christians, and Jews, and heathen, were witnesses of the great power of God in the conversion of the persecutor Saul. At Lydda, no insignificant city, Æneas was cured of his palsy and raised from his bed, so that "all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned unto the Lord."⁴ At Joppa, Tabitha was raised from the dead at the prayer of St. Peter, "and it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord."⁵ So also at Cæsarea, at Lystra, at Philippi, at Ephesus, at Troas, and in other large cities, the Apostles wrought miracles, and the fact that they were the work of superhuman power was confessed by multitudes, and the record of these miracles published in this book, whilst the larger part of those who witnessed them were alive.⁶ In this we have both a testimony to the truth of the miracles, since men interested in rejecting them were yet compelled to acknowledge that they had been wrought, and also an evidence that if, for a while, the Roman power was withheld from persecuting the Church, it was not because the great advance of Christianity was taking place in remote and unfrequented parts of the Roman world, nor that the authorities of the Roman empire were unaware of that advance, however much they may for a time have disregarded or despised the claims of the Church.

In this indifference of the Roman authorities to the existence of the Christian Church, during the first quarter of a century, we may reverently trace the hand of God restraining the persecution, which, after a time, burst forth under

¹ Acts v. 11.² Acts v. 12, 14.³ Acts ix. 36—42.⁴ Acts viii. 13.⁵ Acts ix. 32—35.⁶ Whitby.

the brutal Nero. Another aid to this rapid promulgation of the gospel "to all people" in those days was the unity of the Roman Empire. The nations within its bounds were indeed of different languages, but to cope with this, the Pentecostal gift supplied the means. There were, as a consequence of centralized power, no new authorities to propitiate. The message once delivered, was like an idea which is caught up and borne on throughout a city, or like the enthusiasm which spreads through a nation when some chord touches all hearts. There were no hindrances to surmount, no frontiers to steal across, no national jealousies to prevent the Apostles' teaching being listened to in the one district, for the very reason that it had been accepted in another. The hunger and thirst of the people pining under the worn-out creeds of heathendom, which were no longer believed in either by learned or by unlearned, as well as the material condition of the world, aided in the propagation of that truth, by which the extinction of the human race within the Roman bounds was arrested, and its corrupting influence on those without was restrained. Secondary means there were, which, in part, accounted for the success of the gospel, for it is one sign of the over-ruling Providence of God that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."¹

SECTION V.

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY OF 'THE ACTS.'

As the regenerating gift of God to man is from above, so also the Church, the channel through which the grace of God is ordinarily conveyed to man, is from above. It is not an aggregation of units, but a body prepared by God. As the natural body of Christ was not from man, but was

¹ Rom. viii. 28.

conceived of the Holy Ghost, so was the body mystical of Christ created by the same Holy Spirit. The Church was completed when the commission was delivered by Christ to His Apostles, and when He gave in His incarnate nature the gifts which as man He had received. His ministerial or diaconal power He received when He took on Him the form of a minister or servant.¹ His priesthood He had in virtue of the Hypostatic union of His manhood with the Godhead.² His Episcopate or rulership of the Church He received, because He humbled Himself to the nature of those over whom He was to be ever after the human, as well as the Divine, Head.³ In the oneness of His person, "He gave gifts" to His Church, breathing out from His body the gift of the Holy Spirit, and thus connecting visibly the gift with His Incarnate nature. He is not the Head of His Church because an aggregation of units required, still less that they sought, a Head, but the units are members of His Church because He has given to them a portion of His own nature, and has taken them up into Himself.

Until Christ gave commission to His Apostles to go forth and to teach, and to gather into His Church from "all nations," and languages, and people,⁴ He contained in His own person all the offices in that Church, without any to partake with Him in the ministry, the priesthood, or the overseership. He was the "bishop" of all souls in that Church, from whom all bishops derive their office of rulers.⁵ He was the great High Priest, the typical and germinal

¹ Phil. ii. 7.

² "The Arians considered that our Lord's Priesthood preceded His Incarnation, and belonged to His Divine nature, and was in consequence the token of an inferior Divinity. . . The Catholic doctrine is that the Divine Word is priest *in* and *according to* His manhood."—*J. H. Newman in Athanasius (Lib. of the Fathers)*.

"The priesthood was pre-ordained to belong to that High Priest who is for ever, and to that King who shall never deceive. For Thou, it says, art a Priest for ever. Thy dominion is an everlasting dominion, and Thy kingdom

is over all generations."—*St. Ephrem*.

"In that character in which He was begotten of the Father, God with God, co-eternal with Him who begat Him, He is not a Priest; but He is a Priest on account of the flesh which He assumed on account of the victim which, received from us, He was to offer for us."—*St. Augustine, Psalm CX*. See also *Petavius de Incarnat.* xii. 3, 4. *Le Blanc. Thes. Theolog. Estius in Magistrum Senten.* lib. iv. dist. 12, § 11.

³ Phil. ii. 9—11; Eph. i. 22.

⁴ Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 25.

Priest of His Church, from whom every priest derives his office. He was the Deacon of His Church, who came for this very end, to be the Deacon or Minister of the Church; that is, He came not to be ministered unto—for none could minister unless they derived the power from Him—but He came to minister, and to give this ministry, as He gave His life for others, since He came as much to minister to as to ransom.¹ He thus not so much centred in His own person the whole official life of the Church, as He was the essential life itself, the source from which the official life of the Church springs, for He did not gather up life into His own person, but He was Light and Life in the concrete. He then is not only “the chief corner-stone,”² the protection of the Church, He is its one “foundation” stone,³ Bishop, Priest, and Deacon; and when He breathed on His Apostles, and sent them forth in His name, He gave them power to be the outward presentments of Himself. When the needs of the Church required it, His Apostles did not create new offices, but they gave up a portion of that which they hitherto had exclusively possessed, and which was concentrated in their own persons. That they might no longer be distracted from their higher duties by the necessity of serving tables, but might give themselves up to the oversight of the flock, they conferred on chosen men the power which they themselves possessed of ministering to that flock. When the growth of the Church demanded it, they gave to others a share in the office of priests of Christ’s Church. By ordination, and the laying on of hands, they conferred this power. But no one can confer that which he does not himself possess. The means, moreover, by which that power is conferred, the stretching forth and the laying on of hands, is also symbolical of the reality of the gift of which the giver has the whole in his own power, and which he, therefore, is able to give to others; not that the higher has power to confer the lower because it is lower, but because he himself possesses that lower office which he confers. The Apostles, therefore, continued to be that which their Lord had become: that which He had made them to be, the

¹ Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45.

² Eph. ii. 20.

³ 1 Cor. iii. 11.

deacons of His flock, the priests of His Church, the bishops of His people, conferring indeed on others, yet without stripping themselves of any ministerial grace, or creating any higher office in order to supply the defects of the lower. In a word, the Church was “developed, not from below, but from above.”¹

This is the key to the whole Ecclesiastical polity which we find developed in the Acts of the Apostles. It is from God, from above, not from men, and from below. The growth and expansion of the Christian Church did not lead the Apostles to create new offices, but it called upon them to ordain men to perform some of those ministerial functions which hitherto the small number of the believers and their concentration in one city permitted them to fulfil. First, they would seem to have ordained men to do the work of the diaconate; afterwards, they ordained men who should not only be priests, but deacons also; and when their own presence could not be assured to distant churches, whether in small towns or in populous cities, and yet the greatness of the congregations there demanded not only the constant service of a priest, but also the diligence and watchful rule of an overseer, they then consecrated men to the episcopal office, who, in addition to their priestly office, should perform that of bishops also. Since, however, the Apostles did not relinquish any office to which they were appointed by Christ, they were still deacons, still priests, as well as bishops, under Him, who, since He will never lay aside the form of a servant or deacon, still ministers in His Church, is for ever performing His spiritual functions as our great High Priest, and is still, and for ever will be, the great Shepherd of the sheep, the Bishop of souls.

¹ “With respect to the government of the earliest Church, the most important consideration appears to be, that the Christian ministry was developed, not from below, but from above. We do not find that the first members of it raised some from among their number to a position higher than the equality on which they had all originally stood; but, on the contrary, that the Apostles, having been at first

the sole depositaries of their Lord’s commission, with all the powers which it conferred, afterwards delegated to others, as their substitutes, assistants, or successors, such portions of their powers as were capable of being transmitted, and as were necessary for the continuance of the Church.”—*Robertson’s History of the Christian Church*, Book I. chap. 1.

It follows from the perpetual deaconship, priesthood, and episcopate of Christ, that there was no time from the moment of the foundation of the Church in which the body of the ministry was not complete. Hence, as might have been well expected, we do not read in the Acts of the Apostles of the original institution of either deacons or presbyters, for this reason, because they had been instituted by Christ, and these offices existed from the moment when He made His Apostles the ministers of His Church. When they needed help they doubtlessly appointed deacons, though it is hardly likely that the account which we have in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the appointment of seven deacons, was anything else than an addition which was then made for a special purpose to the number of deacons already existing. Otherwise the Apostles would scarcely have selected the whole of these seven from the Hellenists, as in that case the same murmuring which the Hellenists had raised against the Hebrews, these latter would have had reason to raise against the body of deacons, had these all been Hellenists. St. Chrysostom indeed considers that the seven then appointed were selected, not for the diaconate but to a special and hitherto novel office, that of the distribution of alms.¹

The reason why the Apostles are so often spoken of as ministers or deacons, as elders or priests, and at the same time as bishops and presbyters, is that in becoming bishops they did not cease to be presbyters, as indeed every bishop now is still a presbyter.

Incidentally, then, we find at the close of the period of which we have the history in *the Acts of the Apostles*, that there were ministers or deacons attendant on the Apostles;² that in passing from a province which they had evangelized, the Apostles left behind them "elders in every city,"³ to maintain the edifice which they had built up, and that the "elders in every city," were entrusted to the oversight of one whose office was not bounded by the town or city,

¹ St. Chrysostom on Acts vi. 3. See also note in Oxford translation of St. Chrysost., p. 199.

² Acts xiii. 5; xv. 39, 40.

³ Tit. i. 5; Acts xx. 17.

but extended over a larger tract of country.¹ About names, it is useless to contend; of these facts there can be no dispute. Titus and Timothy had a larger sphere of duty than an elder at Ephesus or Troas, and these latter a higher duty than he who merely attended on a bishop or apostle, and was known as his attendant and minister.

SECTION VI.

COMMENTARIES.

THE neglect of *the Acts of the Apostles* in early times of which St. Chrysostom complains in his homilies has continued down to our own days. Though this history of the planting and growth of the Christian Church is of surpassing interest, yet there is scarcely any book of the Old or the New Testament of which we possess so few commentaries, and even in those cases where it has been illustrated or explained in the course of a professed commentary on the whole of the New Testament, the commentary on *the Acts of the Apostles* has often been executed with less care, and in a more jejune manner, than the other portions of the commentary. The Homilies of *St. John Chrysostom on the Acts* are so inferior to the rest of his writings that they hardly seem to be from the same pen as the Homilies on St. Matthew, St. John, and the Epistles of St. Paul, and hence, though without reason, some have doubted whether they were indeed his. The commentaries of *Theophylact* and of *Ecumenius* have closely followed those of St. Chrysostom, and are marked by the same characteristics as his.

In the mid period between the days of the Fathers of the Church and our own times, is comprehended two great periods, during which the illustration of Holy Scripture engaged the attention of able theologians, that of the thirteenth, and the latter half of the sixteenth and the

¹ Acts xiv. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Tit. i. 5.

first half of the seventeenth centuries. Yet though the remaining books of Holy Scripture were illustrated and explained with great learning, *the Acts of the Apostles* received a scant share of this attention. The commentary on *the Acts* in the great commentary of Cardinal Hugo,¹ is shorter and of less interest than that which he has written on the Gospels and Epistles. Gorranus,² usually a very able commentator, though he does not omit all notice of *the Acts*, yet, for some reason or other, contents himself with incorporating, with scarcely any addition, the brief commentary of Cardinal Hugo in his own work. Thomas Aquinas³ omits altogether this book, though he has left us commentaries on the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, as well as on the Epistles and Apocalypse, and also arranged the very valuable catena, which is deservedly known as the Catena Aurea. In addition to these commentaries on parts of the New Testament, he left behind him similar commentaries on several books of the Old Testament, so that his omission of *the Acts* is the more remarkable. Fromond⁴ is hardly as satisfactory in treating of this book, as he confessedly is when engaged upon the Epistles. Cajetan⁵ is very brief, and also unsatisfactory, saying little, and not saying that little as well as in his commentary on the Gospels, and Estius⁶ passes it by, except in the scanty but valuable scholia which are contained in his volume on "The difficult passages of Holy Scripture." As to professed scholiasts, such as Sà,⁷ Menochius,⁸ Mariana,⁹ and Tirinus,¹⁰ the latter is fuller than the others, and is fuller on *the Acts* than on any one of the Gospels, he, however, does not rise much above the order of a scholiast.

As to monographs devoted to the elucidation of *the Acts of the Apostles*, the volume of Gabriel Sanchez¹¹ deserves honourable mention for its value. The commentary of Sylveira,¹² again, is on almost as large a scale as those which

¹ Died about A.D. 1264, according to Bellarmine.

² Flourished about A.D. 1350, or, according to another account, A.D. 1400

³ Died A.D. 1274.

⁴ Flourished A.D. 1650.

⁵ Died A.D. 1534.

⁶ Died A.D. 1613.

⁷ Died A.D. 1596.

⁸ Flourished A.D. 1630.

⁹ Died A.D. 1624.

¹⁰ Died A.D. 1636.

¹¹ Died A.D. 1628.

¹² Flourished A.D. 1640.

he has written or compiled on the Gospels. The largest and most satisfactory volume on this book, however, is that of *Iorinus*.¹ *Ferus*² has a volume on *the Acts*, which, however, is not equal in value to his volumes on St. Matthew and St. John; and the commentary of *Hoffmeister*³ does not extend beyond the twelfth chapter of *the Acts*.

Among modern commentaries I have made much use of that published by *Dr. Wordsworth*, fortunately before other cares hindered his bestowing his attention upon this book. *Olshausen's* commentary is a brief, hasty, and not well digested supplement to his volumes on the Gospels; and *Lechler's* volume, in *Lange's* collection, adds nothing to our knowledge of *the Acts*, though it contains some useful homiletic hints. The volumes of *Zeller* and of *Baumgarten* are hardly commentaries, though they treat of the Acts of the Apostles, and that from very different points of view. The well-known volumes of *Biscoe* and *Paley* ought not to be omitted in an enumeration of the sources to which a commentator on the Acts will gladly turn, and never without profit, though they do not profess to be commentaries on this book;⁴ and the volumes of Messrs. *Conybeare* and *Howson*, though professing only to be a Life of St. Paul, with notices of his Epistles, contain conveniently arranged illustrations extending over the larger half of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Whilst thankfully acknowledging my obligation to these and similar books, I would specially name those of two living writers, to whom I have never turned without finding something of value, the commentary on the Acts by *Dr. Hackett*, of the United States (Boston, 1872), and that of *Francis Patrizi* (Rome, 1864).

¹ Died A.D. 1634.

² Died A.D. 1554.

³ Flourished A.D. 1546.

⁴ "Hunc locum mirificè pertractatum habet Gulielmus Paley in suis *Horis Paulinis*, demonstrans in libro Actuum Apostolorum et in epistolis, quas Pauli esse credimus, quam plurima eadem quidem narrari aut commem-

orari, sed ita ut manifestè appareat, non modo non ex composito id factum verum etiam nec fieri potuisse, quodque consequitur, omnem communicati inter ambos scriptores consilii suspicionem necessario abesse, atque adeo tum de illius libri tum de harum epistolarum fide certo constare."—*Fr. Xav. Patri-tius in Act. Apost. Comment.*

SECTION VIII.

CHRONOLOGY.

ALTHOUGH the events narrated in *the Acts of the Apostles* are arranged by St. Luke in chronological sequence, and one or two relative dates occur, the exact time when the Ascension of our Blessed Lord took place is still, and probably will ever remain, an unsettled point, and without ascertaining this, it is of course impossible to conclude with certainty as to the dependent dates. Fully to place before the reader a survey of the arguments on which the dates of Usher, Baronius, Jarvis, and Wieseler respectively are based, would require too large a space, and the details of mathematicians and astronomers are of too technical a character to be of much value to the general reader. The earliest period assumed for the crucifixion and ascension of our Lord, and, therefore, for the beginning of the events related in *the Acts*, which is entitled to consideration, is A.D. 28, that of Dr. Jarvis,¹ the latest date is that of Schrader, A.D. 35, and every year within this space of seven years has its advocates : A.D. 29 is chosen by St. Jerome,² by Patrizi,³ by Hug,⁴ and Ideler; A.D. 30 is preferred by Bengel,⁵ Greswell,⁶ Alford,⁷ Wordsworth,⁸ Dollinger,⁹ Wieseler,¹⁰ A.D. 31 is advocated by Lorinus,¹¹ Vogel, and Dr. Burton;¹² A.D. 32 is the date assigned by Süsskind, Eichhorn, and Cappellus.¹³ The year

¹ Chronological Introduction to the History of the Church. London, 1844.

² Commentarium in Danielem, xi. 26.

³ In Actus Apostolorum Comment. Romæ, 1867.

⁴ Introduction to the Writings of the New Testament.

⁵ Gnomon. Novi Testamenti. Tubing. 1759.

⁶ Harmonia Evangelica, Ox., 1840, and Prolegomena ad Harmonia, Ox., 1840.

⁷ New Testament, vol. ii., in Intro-

duction. London, 1871.

⁸ Comment. in Acts, vol. ii. Comment on New Testament. Lond., 1862.

⁹ First Age of the Church. London, 1866.

¹⁰ Chronological Synopsis of the Four Gospels. London, 1864.

¹¹ In Actus Apost. Comment. Lugduni, 1609.

¹² Chronology of the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles of St. Paul. Ox., 1830.

¹³ Hist. Apostolica illustrata. Genevæ, 1634.

33 A.D. is supported by the largest number of writers, including Eusebius,¹ Scaliger, Usher, Tillemont,² Hardouin,³ Lamy,⁴ Kuinoel,⁵ Heinrichs,⁶ Feilmose, Frassen,⁷ Calvisius, Whiston,⁸ Haenlein, Olshausen,⁹ Hackett,¹⁰ Renan,¹¹ Lewin,¹² Blunt,¹³ Cook,¹⁴ Bond.¹⁵ A.D. 34 is preferred by Baronius, and, adopting his chronology, by Cornelius à Lapide,¹⁶ Sylveira,¹⁷ Amelote,¹⁸ and others; and A.D. 35 by Schrader.¹⁹

A glance at the names here given, will suffice to show that the diversity of opinion on the chronology of the events in our Lord's life does not arise from any theological prepossessions of the writers, but that it is one which is inherent in the subject itself. The greatest event in the history even of the world, came not with noise and "observation,"²⁰ and the birth, crucifixion, and ascension of Christ, engaged less attention at the moment than the routine succession of consuls or of proconsuls throughout the Roman empire. It is useless then to expect that we shall now attain to certainty as to the year in which our Incarnate Lord ascended from Olivet, and without ascertaining this date we can only approximate to the true dates of most of the events recorded in *the Acts of the Apostles*. Cappellus places the end of the captivity of St. Paul at Rome in A.D. 57, whilst Patrizi, in this agreeing with Dr. Burton, assigns the termination of his imprisonment and the

¹ *Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ*. lib. i. cap. 10. Oxon., 1838.

² *Memoires pour servir à l'hist. Eccles.* Venise, 1732.

³ *Comment. in Nov. Testament.* Amstel., 1741.

⁴ *Apparatus Chronologicus et Geographicus ad Com.* Paris, 1698.

⁵ *Comment. in Nov. Testamenti historicos.* Lipsiæ, 1818.

⁶ *Act. Apostolorum Annotat. illust.* Gottingæ, 1809.

⁷ *Disquisitiones Biblicæ.* Venetiis, 1781.

⁸ *Short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, etc.* Camb., 1702.

⁹ *Biblical Comment. on the Gospels and Acts.* London, 1863.

¹⁰ *Commentary on the Text of the Acts of the Apostles.* Boston, 1872.

¹¹ *Les Apôtres. Introduction*, p. xx.

Paris, 1866.

¹² *Fasti Sacri.* London, 1865.

¹³ *History of the Christian Church.* London.

¹⁴ *Commentary on the Acts.* London, 1866.

¹⁵ *Handy-book of Rules and Tables by J. J. Bond.* London, 1869.

¹⁶ *Comment. in Acta Apostolorum.* Antwerp, 1698.

¹⁷ *Com. in Acta Apostolorum.* Lugduni, 1701.

¹⁸ *Le Nouveau Testament.* Paris, 1688.

¹⁹ In a treatise "of the true years of the Birth and Death of Christ," by Nicholas Mann (London, 1733), it is contended that A.D. 26, A.U.C. 779, was the year of the crucifixion.

²⁰ Luke xvii. 10.

publication of the book of *the Acts*, to the year A.D. 58. Olshausen, with many others, incline to the date of 65 A.D.; whilst Conybeare and Howson,¹ agreeing with J. G. Rosenmüller,² Kuinoel, and Hackett, prefer the intermediate date of A.D. 63. Whether any new discoveries will remove the doubts which exist, and enable us to attain to anything like certainty as to the date, it is impossible to conjecture. Happily the subject is not of importance as to our reception of the truths contained in the book itself. Whether St. Paul first entered Rome as a captive for the Gospel's sake, in the fourth, the eighth, or the tenth year of the reign of Nero, in no way affects the truth, nor even the probability, that the events recorded for us by his companion St. Luke happened in the order indicated by him.

Without, then, entering into chronological details, and adding another conjecture to those already made as to the year of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of our Blessed Lord, I am satisfied with the result of the labours of those who fix these events in the year A.D. 29-30.³ It is only necessary to refer to this point, because it affects the tabular view of the events recorded in the book of the Acts, which follows this Introduction.

¹ Life and Epistles of St. Paul. London, 1864.

² Scholia in Nov. Testamentum. Norimbergæ, 1804.

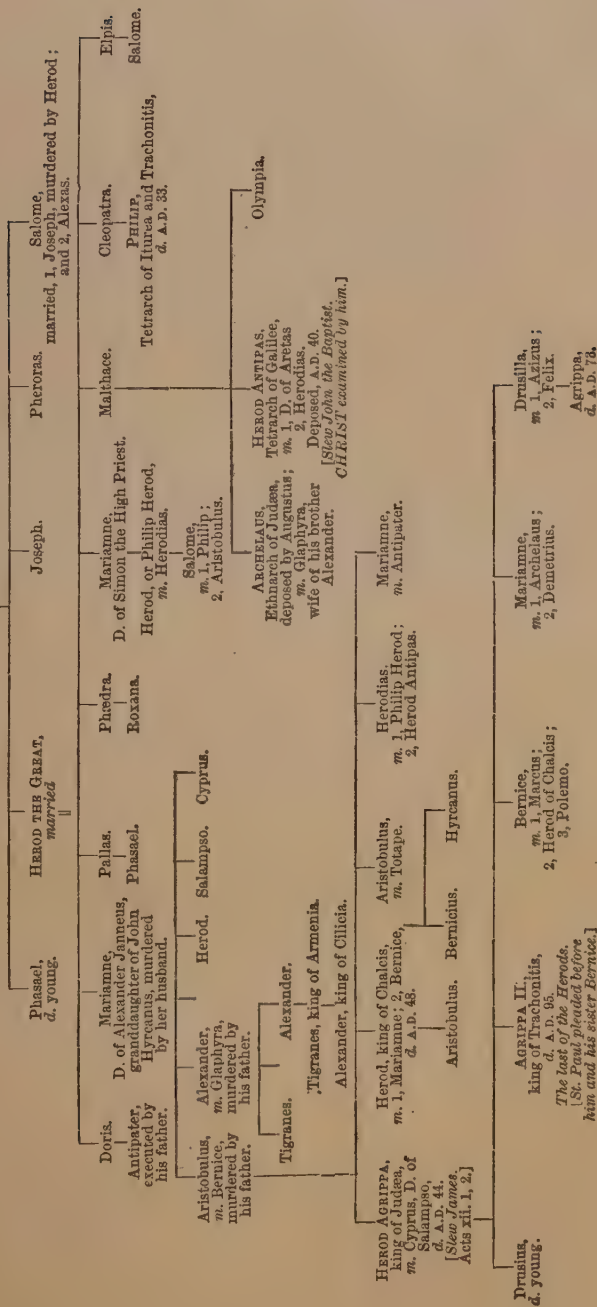
³ Much of the apparent diversity of opinion as to the year in which these events occurred, arises from the different mode of reckoning made use of. The year A.D. 29 of one author being spoken of as A.D. 30; the first computing the year from the 1st of January, the latter from the 26th of

March. In this way the Crucifixion on the 22nd of March will be assigned to the year A.D. 29, whilst the Ascension will be considered to have taken place in A.D. 30. The same confusion is observable in other dates. One writer, accustomed to the modern computation of time, will speak of A.U.C. 780 as the second year of Tiberius, whilst another, with greater accuracy, will include the chief part of A.U.C. 780 in the first year of Tiberius.

A.U.C.	EMPERORS OF ROME.	A.D.	PROCURATORS OF JUDEA.	GOVERNORS OF SYRIA.	TETRARCHS OF GALILEE.	HIGH PRIESTS.
782	TIBERIUS, associated em-	29	Pontius Pilate from Sept. 1,		Herod Antipas from A.U.C.	Caiaphas from A.D. 25.
783	peror, Feb. 762, A.U.C. Sole	30	A.U.C. 779. A.D. 26.		750.	
784	emperor from 19th Aug.,	31				
785	A.D. 14, A.U.C. 767.	32				
786		33				
787		34		Vitellius.		
788		35				
789		36	Pilate removed.			
790	{ Tiberius died March 16,	37	Maryllus sent by Caligula as			Jonathan, Theophilus.
791	{ CALIGULA, Emp.	38	Ἡπείρωτος of Judea.			
792	{ [Tacit. Ann. vi. 15.]	39		Petronius Turpilianus.	Herod Antipas banished.	
793		40			Herod Agrippa, Tetrarch.	
794	{ Caligula died Jan. 24.,	41				Simon. Matthias.
795	{ CLAUDIUS, Emp.	42		Vibius Marsus.	Herod Agrippa made king	Elioneus.
796	{ [Suet. Calig. 58.]	43			over all dominions of his	
797		44	Cuspius Fadus.	Cassius Longinus.	grandfather Herod the	Joseph, son of Cami.
798		45			great. Herod Agrippa	
799		46	Tiberius Alexander.		died A.D. 44.	Ananias, son of Nebe-
800		47		Numidius Quadratus.		daeus.
801		48	Ventidius Cumanus.			
802		49				
803		50				
804		51				
805		52				
806		53	Claudius Felix.			Ismael, son of Phabi.
807	{ Claudius died Oct. 13.	54				
808	{ NERO, Emp.	55				
809	{ [Tacit. Ann. xii. 69.	56				
810	{ Suet. Claud. 45.	57				
811	{ Dio lx. 34.]	58				
812		59				
813		60	Porcius Festus.	Corbulo.		Joseph Cabi.
814		61				

FAMILY OF THE HERODS. (Chiefly from 'Lewin's Fasti Sacri'.)

ANTIPATER THE IDUMEAN *m.* CYPRUS.



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COMMENTARY ON

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.



CHAPTER I.

EMPEROR OF ROME,	TIBERIUS.
PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,	PONTIUS PILATE.
HIGH PRIEST,	CAIAPHAS.

(1) *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.*¹ [The Epistle for the Ascension day, verses 1—11.] Luke i. 13.

As the last of the events recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles² took place about A.D. 63, it is probable that St. Luke wrote this present *treatise* at that time. The Gospel, *the former treatise*, he had already written; and the first two Gospels, of St. Matthew and St. Mark, preceded it. It is not, then, likely that the *former* book, or *treatise*, to which he here refers, was written—at the farthest—later than A.D. 58; and the Gospel which bears his name is the *former treatise*, since it is at once earlier than the *Acts of the Apostles* as to the time in which it was written, and so as to the events recorded in it. Wordsworth, Lange.

As the Gospel narrative, which St. Luke had already sent to Theophilus, contained a history of the deeds and sayings of Christ, the present book, commencing at the date of the departure of Christ in visible presence from the earth, is taken up with the sayings and deeds of the

¹ "Scripsi de Jesu à tempore quo ipse signa facere et docere usque in hunc diem qua ejusdem consummatis, unde et nunc perat rediit."—*Bede*.

² "Acta seu Actus Apostolorum hic vocantur. Cur ab actis potius quam à dictis sortitur nomen, nam et dicta et acta intelligi etiam dicta."—*Novarinus*.

vigintidue conciones Apostolorum huc continentur? Apud Deum magis factorum quam dictorum habetur ratio. Nimirum statim Christianus lector admonetur, officii sui potius esse facere quam docere, simplicius, dici potest per acta intelligi etiam dicta."—*Novarinus*.

Chrysostom.

Apostles of our Blessed Lord.¹ The person to whom this record is addressed was, it would seem, a person of authority from office or position, a powerful and distinguished friend of the Christians, a favourer of the infant Church, and most likely a member of the fold of Christ. Probably he held some post of influence in the civil government which enabled him to befriend the Christians in their trials.² Some have supposed, from the significance of the name, that the whole body of the faithful is here addressed by St. Luke, and typified under a proper name—the lover of God: this, however, cannot be maintained. Theophilus, to whom the Evangelist is writing, was undoubtedly a man.³

Chrysostom.
Euthymius.

The *former treatise*—that is, the Gospel—written by St. Luke is a record of *all that Jesus began to do and teach*—a history of the deeds of His life and of *all* His teaching on earth; that is, it comprises not only the chief things which Christ did from His birth and infancy until the moment when He ascended up into heaven—things which are necessary to be known for the instruction, the guidance, and the encouragement of Christians in the way of salvation—but it contains *all* that is thus necessary for mankind to know of the words and actions which the Man Christ *Jesus* did and said upon earth.⁴ It is the life of incarnate God which St. Luke records in the Gospel, in this differing from that of St. John, who dwells upon the eternal existence of the Logos, as well as upon His manifestation in the flesh. And in recalling the *former treatise*, St. Luke recalls also the fact of the trustworthiness of his history:—

Sā.

Tirinus.

Chrysostom.
Cyril.
Augustine.

Corn. & Lap.

(1) He was a sufficient witness of the events which he

¹ “With the Ascension the first book of Luke terminates and the second begins, which describes not so much the acts of the Apostles as the acts of the Holy Spirit; even as the former treatise contains the acts of Jesus Christ.”—*Bengel*.

² *Κράτιστε*, most noble, prefixed to the name of a person, as in Luke i. 4, is an epithet which generally refers not to character but to station. The same title is given by Claudius Lysias and Tertullus to Felix, and by Paul to Festus.—*Hackett*.

³ “*O Theophili*—cui Evangelium scripserat et Actus scribit. Interpretatur autem *Dei amator*; quod si es, et tibi scribitur.”—*Hugo de S. Charo*.

“Every true Christian is a Theophilus, and every Theophilus hath a

Gospel dedicated to him, as Saint Ambrose sweetly: ‘*Si Deum diligis, ad te scriptum est: si ad te scriptum est, suscipe munus Evangelistæ, pignus amici in penetralibus animi diligenter asserva.*’”—*Dean Boys*.

⁴ “Non omnia sed ex omnibus præcipua quædam.”—*Sā*. “De omnibus non dicit omnia quia omnia facta Christi non possunt per singuli scribi, secundum quod dicit Joh. ult.”—*Lyra*. “*De omnibus*. Lucas in Evangelium non omnia retulit quæ Jesus fecit ac docuit; sed aliud est *λεγειν πάντα* loqui omnia, aliud *λεγειν περί πάντα*, loqui de omnibus. Rem Augustinus sic explicuit. ‘De omnibus fecit sermonem eligendo de omnibus unde faceret sermonem.’” (De consensu evangelist. lib. iv. c. 8.)—*Patritius*.

narrates, *having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first.* Luke i. 3.

(2) He here records the fulfilment of many of the promises of Christ, and of much which He had predicted during His life upon earth. Chrysostom.

*All that Jesus began both to do and teach.*¹ The word *Jesus* is used emphatically; it is the deeds of the Man Jesus which St. Luke recorded in his Gospel; for the Logos who took to Himself our nature did many things before His manifestation, and at the beginning of time created the world itself and all that it contains. *All that Jesus did and taught:* miracles as well as doctrines; the truths taught by His deeds as well as those uttered by His lips; for in all He did and said He proved Himself the teacher of mankind both by word and by example.² And not only what He did, but what He suffered; for His sufferings were deeds by which He procured our redemption, and taught us how to suffer.³ For what He suffered He suffered by His own will; and His incarnation, His sufferings at the hand of the Jews, and His crucifixion, were all endured by Him who needed not to have suffered anything. So that in the number of His deeds His sufferings are rightly reckoned. St. Luke speaks of the things which *Jesus began to do and teach*, and these he has related in his Gospel; here he is about to narrate what were done by the Apostles through His strength. His work is continuous, it still goes on. The work which He did upon earth was but the beginning of that which is being completed in heaven. It was the pattern and the call to His disciples to do as He did; to complete that

Cajetan.

Theophylet.

Chrysostom.

Streso.

Wordsworth.

¹ "It seems to be understood as if it had been written, *περὶ (πραγμάτων) ὧν πάντων ἐποίησε καὶ ἐδίδαξε*, &c., *concerning things, all which Jesus did and taught*, i. e. Jesus Himself, exclusively of His Apostles. But in the present treatise he intimates that he shall speak of what was done and taught by some Apostles of Jesus after His ascension: for Luke's Gospel reaches so far. The antecedent being in the genitive case causeth the relative to be put in the same case; and the relative draws the following adjective after it; instead of *περὶ πραγμάτων ἃ πάντα ἐποίησε*. There is exactly the same construction Luke iii. 19, *περὶ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησε πονηρῶν ὁ Ἡρώδης*, and xix. 37; Acts x. 39,

xxii. 10." — *Markland in Bowyer's Conjectures.*

² "He not only taught men to do this or that, but He gave them also the ensample, and did the thing first Himself." — *Sir Thomas More's Eng. Works*, f. 1319.

³ "Ὅν ἤρξατο—τὰ θαύματα καὶ τὰς διδασκαλίας φησὶν" οὐ τοῦτο δὲ μόνον, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ τῷ ποιῆν ἐδίδασκεν· οὐ γὰρ λόγῳ μὲν ἐπέτρεπε τοῖς ἄλλοις πράττειν, αὐτὸς δὲ οὐκ ἔπαρτε· διὰ τοῦτο παρήνει εἰς μίμησιν ἀρετῆς μετατιθεσθαι." — *Theophylact in loco.*

"Ἱερέα φρόνησις καὶ βίος καὶ εὐγένεια ποιεῖ· λόγῳ μὲν τὴν ἀρετὴν δίδασκε, ἔργῳ δὲ αὐτὴν κήρυσσε." — *Jo. Damascene.*

Novarinus. work which He had but *began to do*. All deeds, all teachings, in Christ's Church must take their rise and have their beginning in Him from whom indeed they derive all their efficiency.

These words, *to do and teach*, remind us that it is the duty of the Christian, especially of the minister of Christ, to do all things in accordance with his teaching, since he teaches at least as powerfully by his deeds as by his words. He is first, indeed, *to do*, and then *to teach*; for the life, the example, of the believer in Christ is that which is most effectual to the persuasion of those who are without the Church.¹ This truth is taught us by the incidents of our Lord's incarnate life. He did: He afforded an example of obedience and of holiness throughout His whole life; He taught not by words at the first but only during the last three years of that life. This, then, is the abstract of the life of the minister of Christ—to follow the example of the great Head of the Church; first to practise the precepts of the Gospel, and then to declare them by deed and word.² To preach the Gospel before we have learnt to practise its precepts, is to reverse the order which Christ observed, to build our house without foundations, and to disregard and depart from the example which Christ has set us.³

Matt. xxviii.¹
19.
Mark xvi. 15,
19.
Luke ix. 51;
xxiv. 51.
John xx. 21.
Acts x. 41, 42.
1 Tim. iii. 16.

(2) *Until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen.*

It is not clear from the original (ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου οὓς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήφθῃ) whether the Apostles are here said to be chosen by Christ through the Holy Ghost, or that those whom He had so chosen Christ taught by the Holy Spirit, by His indwelling in their hearts, or among them. Practically however this

Corn. à Lap.

1 "Prêcher l'Evangile avant que de l'avoir pratiqué, c'est renverser l'ordre, bâtir sans fondement et mal imiter Jesus Christ."—*Quesnel*.

2 "Benè docere et malè vivere nil aliud est quàm se sua voce prodere, proprioque ore damnationi subicere."—*Ferus*.

3 "Facilis ad exhortandum sit ratio, efficax ad suadendum; validiora sunt tamen exempla quam verba, et plenius

est opere docere quam voce."—*S. Leo, Serm. de S. Lauren*. "Fecit prius Christus, deinde docuit; quin majorem suæ vitæ partem actioni dedit, minorem prædicationi: nam per annos triginta in actione fuit; docuit verò tribus tantum suæ vitæ annis, dictis suis per opera, quæ præmisit, fidem et efficaciam concilians. Nimirum, nihil doctore frigidius, qui nudis dumtaxat verbis edocet."—*Novarinus*.

doubt is of no moment.¹ What our Blessed Lord did, He did by the Spirit as a means or instrument, so that both the election and the teaching of the Apostles might be said to be done *through the Holy Ghost*. Hence Christ, when He read from the book of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me*, expressly applied these words to Himself, and said, *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears*; and when, after His resurrection, He gave *commandments* to the Apostles for the direction of that Church over which by the *Holy Ghost* they were made *overseers*, He prepared them to receive these *commandments* by breathing upon them and by giving to them the Holy Spirit.² He who after His ascension sent the Holy Spirit to abide as *another Comforter* with the believers, ever works through the operations of that Spirit. If, however, we limit these words to mean that Christ gave, as He now gives, *commandments through the Holy Ghost*, this was emphatically the case with Him all of whose words are *spirit* and *life*—not, that is, human and earthly, but spiritual and heavenly.

Is. lxi. 1.

Luke iv. 21.

Acts xx. 28.

John xx. 22.

Dion. Carth.

John vi. 63.
Chrysostom.

Until He was taken up—for He was truly man and had no power as man to ascend. Yet we are not told that He was taken up by angels, or by any other power than His own power, who was really God. The manhood was taken up by that Divinity which, though not mingled with it, was yet united inseparably to it. And this ascension of Christ was not until *after He had given commandments unto the Apostles*, and had taught them, and given them power to perform all that He had appointed. In this was the love of the Saviour manifested, and His care for the Church which He had founded. So let His ministers labour diligently, and embue the souls of those committed to their charge with spiritual truth and with a perfect knowledge of God's commandments, so that when they have departed the members of the flock may still follow in that path which the Saviour has marked out for them.

Theophylact.

Corn. & Lap.

Boys.

The Apostles whom He had chosen. In these words we are reminded of that truth which is evidenced in all of our Blessed Lord's dealings with His Church—He chooses us, and not we Him. He seeks us out before we come to Him. Were it not so, we should neither choose Him nor come to

¹ "In this construction there is an uncertainty about the connection of διὰ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου: but there is a difficulty, whether you connect it with ἐντειλάμενος or with ἀνελήφθη; and therefore the general opinion has been in favour of joining it with οὗς ἐξελέ-

ξaro."—Olshausen.

² "Quos per Spiritum Sanctum elegit. Sensus hic est: Christum ita apostolis præcepisse, ut simul eos Spiritu Sancto afflaret, quo juvante illi præcepta intellexerent et exsequerentur."—*Patritius*.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Him. His very choice of us moves us to love Him. When He seeks us out, He gives us strength to return to Him. He chose the Apostles from the mass of the world, and made them able ministers of His word.

Jesus was taken up—

Mic. ii. 13.

(1) That He might open to us a way to heaven, according to the prophecy: *The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their King shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them.*

John xiv. 2.

(2) That He might prepare a place for us in heaven, according to His own words: *I go to prepare a place for you.*

(3) That so long as we are on earth He might intercede by His presence for us.

Alb. Magnus.

(4) That He might raise our hearts and affections to that place whither He had gone, and so lift us from earth and from earthly things.

Boys.

Our Lord was taken up from the same place whither He went to be crucified. One place, one mount,¹ was the passage to His cross and to His crown; thus teaching us that the way to heaven and to eternal life is by the gate of death, and that the joy of the ascended life is reserved for those who have stood beneath His cross and have shared in the sorrow of His passion.

Quesnel.

Mark xvi. 11.
Luke xxiv.

36.

John xx. 19,

26;

xxi. 1, 14.

1 Cor. xv. 5.

(3) *To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days,² and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

To whom, to these His Apostles, He showed Himself alive,

¹ "Prius montem pedes Christus ascendit, deinde in cœlum evolavit. Scilicet humano more, quantum poterat, terram gradiendo et quasi gradibus quibusdam ascendendo, cœlum petit, nec miraculo, quamdiu naturæ vis obsequi poterat, utitur. Quæ res documento nobis esse potest, ne per miracula petamus, quod propriis viribus possumus obtinere. Docemur præterea ad perfectionis culmen paulatimeundum, nec statim volandum esse, aut viribus majora præstanda."—*Novarinus*. "Mons olivarum, toties antea orationis præsertim causâ à Christo, oleo lætitiæ inuncto, frequentatus, ubi et agoniam passus sanguinem sudavit."—*Lorinus*.

² "It is a tradition [Sanhedr. fol.

43, 1]. On the evening of the Passover they hanged Jesus. And a crier went before Him for *forty days*, saying, 'Behold the man condemned to be stoned, because by the help of magic he hath deceived and drawn away Israel into an apostasy. Whoever hath anything to allege in testimony of his innocence, let him come forth and bear witness.' But they find none that would be a witness in His behalf. But He Himself gives a sufficient testimony of His own innocence, having for the space of *forty days* conversed amongst men after His resurrection from death, under the power of which He could not be kept by reason of His innocence."—*Lightfoot*.

not continuously but at intervals, that so they should the more long for and desire His presence, and that He might thus prepare them for His withdrawal in bodily presence from the world. *He showed Himself*, His very body, not in appearance only but in truth: *alive*, having really died and risen again from the dead; *alive*, no more to die: *by many infallible proofs*¹ of sight, hearing, and touch, in confirmation of the fact of His resurrection from the tomb in which they had placed Him, and by miracles—the *many other things* which removed from them all doubts, and to which St. John refers at the close of his Gospel. *Being seen of them*, not *forty days*, but during forty days (δὲ ἡμερῶν τεσσαράκοντα)²—coming, that is, and disappearing: coming, that they might assure themselves He had risen a man as He was buried; disappearing, that they might apprehend Him to be more than man. There is a marked difference between the intercourse which our Blessed Lord had with His disciples before His resurrection and that which He had with them afterwards. Before, they knew where He would be, so that Judas could lead the officers and soldiers at midnight and take Him: after His resurrection He only occasionally appeared amongst them. Before, they went with Him; they saw Him afar off gradually coming nearer to them: afterwards, He appeared suddenly amongst them as they journeyed, or as they were assembled with closed doors.³ All this must have accustomed them to the fact of His abiding spiritual presence, though they saw Him not, and should suffice to convince us of the reality of His presence where two or three are gathered together in His name, though there may be no outward tokens of His being in

Ecumenius.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Bengel.

Sa.

John xxi. 25.

Grotius.

Chrysostom.

John xvii. 2.

Mark vi. 48—
50.
Luke xxiv.
15.
John xx. 19.

¹ Τεκμήριος—evidence, irresistible proof: σημῖον ἀληθείας, *Hesych.* See Aristotle on Rhetoric, book i. cap. 2, and his distinction between the εἰκός and the σημῖον. To this τεκμήριον St. Ignatius appeals (ad Smyr. § 3); “Ἐγὼ γὰρ καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ἐν σαρκὶ Αὐτὸν οἶδα, καὶ πιστεύω ὄντα.” It is a word that does not occur elsewhere in the N. Test. “Plato uses it to denote the strongest possible logical proof, as opposed to that which is weaker, and Aristotle employs it to signify demonstrative evidence. The language seems to show that the first Christians had distinctly resolved the question whether the Saviour’s resurrection was real or not, and had assured

themselves of its reality by evidence which did not admit in their minds of the shadow of a doubt.”—*Hackett.*

² Per dies quadraginta apparens eis. *Vulgate.* For forty days appearing to them.—*Peschito Syr.* Leur apparoisant durant quarante jours.—*Mons Vers.* Sehen unter ihnen vierzig Tage lang.—*German Vers.*

³ *Baumgarten*, in his Apostolical History, vol. i. p. 9 (Eng. trans.), perhaps pressing the force of the word too far, observes that “The word ὀπτανόμενος signifies that, in order to converse with His disciples during these forty days, He quitted the invisible world on each occasion.”

our midst.¹ He remained then, and appeared to them for this time—

(1) That He might certify them of the fact of His resurrection from the dead.

(2) That he might give them the most convincing proofs of the identity of His risen body with that which was crucified and buried.

(3) That He might instruct them more perfectly *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, unfolding the dark things of Scripture, teaching them the truths which related to Himself, the Eternal King, and to that kingdom which He was about to set up militant now and in this world, triumphant hereafter and in the heavenly world.²

This period of *forty days* is a significant space of time in Holy Scripture, and is frequently allotted as a time of probation before some great event which concerned God's kingdom. For *forty days and forty nights* rain was sent upon the earth as the prelude to the general deluge. Before the giving of the law to the people of Israel *Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights*; and when, after the destruction of the first tables, the law was renewed on Mount Sinai, we are again told of Moses that *he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights*. This same space of time was spent by the spies who were sent forth to search and report on the condition of Canaan, the type of the spiritual inheritance of the people of God. For *forty days and forty nights* Elijah journeyed before he came by God's direction *unto Horeb the mount of God*. The time of probation and of repentance granted to Nineveh was a like space of *forty days*. When, again, we turn to the New Testament, we note the observance of the same space of forty days. Forty days after His birth was our Blessed Lord presented in the Temple at Jerusalem. Before He entered upon the work of His ministry after His baptism He was *led by the Spirit into the wilderness*, and was *forty days tempted of the devil*. So now He abode on earth forty days after His resurrection,

¹ "Apparuit per dies quadraginta non continuè sed quandoque, tum ut immortalem se declararet, tum ut excitaret desiderium sui, tum ut charitatem toties, et in omnibus apparentem exhiberet, cum tamen humilitatem suam in cruce omnibus spectandam proposuerit."—*Salmeron*.

² "Vide quomodo totum erat nostrum quicquid agebat, quicquid patie-

batur. Si enim res suas ageret, statim ascenderet usque in sedem majestatis in excelsis, imò non inde descendisset. Sed qui propter nos et nostram salutem descendit de cœlis, etiam post beatam resurrectionem per quadraginta dies manens in terris apparet discipulis et in multis argumentis confirmat fidem suæ resurrectionis."—*Joannes Delafuente in Marcum*.

and before His ascension into glory.¹ What significancy there may be in the number *forty*, we are not informed; the recurrence, however, of this space of time, usually in connection with some event of more than ordinary importance, would lead us to believe that there is a mystery in this number. Nor is this diminished when, in parallelism with the forty years' wandering of the children of Israel in the desert—when after the murmuring and rebellion of the people it was declared, *Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years. . . . After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years*—Jerusalem had its forty years of trial and space for repentance after the crucifixion of Christ, and not until that period of time had been accomplished was it destroyed by the Romans. For *forty days* He showed Himself alive.² His resurrection was known to the whole nation of the Jews. For *forty days* they were obdurate; and then, at the end of forty years, *each day for a year*, came the destruction of the nation.

Wordsworth.

Num. xiv.
33, 34.

Lightfoot.

He spake to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, that is—

(1) Of the Church militant, the kingdom of God upon earth, its governance, and the means by which it was to be extended.

(2) Of the Church triumphant, the kingdom of God in heaven—of the glories of that place to which He was going in order to prepare it for them.

(4) And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me.

Luke xxiv.
43, 49.
John xiv. 16
26, 27;
xvi. 7.
Acts ii. 33.

The Apostles were bidden by Christ not to depart from

¹ "Dicit quædam glossa quod quia per quadraginta horas mortuus fuerat, quadraginta diebus se vivere confirmat."—Aquinas *Par. Tert. Summa. quest. 57, art. 1.*

² "Post passionem resurgens vivum se Apostolis exhibuit Christus. Et non vivus erat antequàm moreretur? Erat. Sed cur nunc signatè dicitur, *quibus et præbuit se ipsum vivum*? An, quia vita ante resurrectionem, tot mortibus obnoxia, vix vitæ mereatur nomen? Nimirum vita hæc fluxa, labilis, ca-

lamitatibus morbisque plena, mors potius dicenda quam vita est. Tunc verè vivemus, cum mortem subierimus immortalitati donati: interim morimur, dum vivimus, et vita ipsa mors quædam est."—*Novarinus.*

³ "'Από 'Ιεροσολύμων.—The form 'Ιεροσόλυμα is used about twenty times in the Acts, but never except after a preposition; in all other cases we have 'Ιερουσαλήμ. The same peculiarity is found in St. Luke's Gospel."—*Wordsworth.*

Jerusalem until they had received the gift enabling them to go forth and bear the message of salvation to the world. In this we may discern a certain fitness :—

(1) That Jesus might be glorified by signs and miracles in the same place where He had humbled Himself to the death of the cross, and had suffered indignities at the hands of men.

(2) That the Jews who were to offer to God the firstfruits of the redemption might be gathered into the fold of the Church of the new covenant in the city of their fathers, that city which was of old the city of God.

(3) That the fact of the resurrection of Christ might be certified in the city where Christ had suffered, and where so many were witnesses of the truth of what the Apostles were to declare—the resurrection from the dead.

Salmeron.

When He was assembled together with them, He gave this command to the eleven.¹ The Apostles were to wait for the promise : thus was their faith to be tried, thus were they to show forth and to strengthen their faith, their patience, and their obedience to His command. God will not impart the gift of the Spirit to those who are indifferent, and who slumber in their spiritual course. He gives to those whose hearts are ready with longing expectation, with ardent desire, and who are watching for the promise of His presence, and girding up their souls with continual prayer. Such a time of waiting is a time of preparation, and this is necessary to the due reception of the gifts from God. When Saul was called to bear testimony to the truth which he had aforetime persecuted, the grace with which he was to be endued came not immediately upon his call, but only after he had waited three days in his blindness, purified the while and prepared by faith to receive the promise. As those who dye cloth first prepare the cloth to receive the dye which it is to take, so does God ordain that the soul which is to receive His grace must be thoroughly in earnest, and not until the soul is thus fitted for the presence of the sanctifying Spirit does He pour into it His grace.²

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Tirinus.

Acts ix. 9—
18.

Chrysostom.

¹ Συναλιζόμενος. "Græci codices hinc variant. Nonnulli legunt συναυλιζόμενος, id est conversans cum eis in eadem aula et hospitio; unde et aliqui codices Latini pro convalescens legunt conversans. Verum S. Chrysostomus, Syrus, Theophylactus, Œcumenius, et alii passim legunt συναλιζόμενος: quod Tigurina, Erasmus, et Pagninus, vertunt congregans eos in idem loci, à voce

ἀλήη sive ἀλία, quæ concilium sive congregationem significat." — Corn. à Lapid.

² "Ab Ierosolymis ne discederent.—Nempe suos milites nolebat in aciem prodire inermes. Ergo Ierosolyma Apostolos exire vetat usque ad Spiritus Sancti adventum." — Mariana in Scholia.

The promise of the Father—that is, the Holy Spirit which was to be given to the Apostles for the work of the ministry to which they had been called. He is called *the promise of the Father* because, though the promise of the coming of the Eternal Spirit was made by the Son, yet the Spirit Himself proceeds from the Father by eternal procession, the one source by whom the Son is begotten, and from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds; and this promise has been made to the Apostles by the Son, through whom all promises are made, since He is the very *Word* of the Father, and declares to man the will and the mercy of the Father.

Œcumenius.

Corn. & Lap.

John i. 1.
Gorranus.

(5) *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with (ἐν) the Holy Ghost¹ not many days hence.*

Joel iii. 18.
Matt. iii. 11.
Acts ii. 4;
xi. 15, 16;
xix. 4.

The time during which the Apostles were to wait at Jerusalem was not defined. Their faith was to be exercised by the delay. Christ said, indeed, that the days of their expectation were to be *not many*, in order that they might continue to hope and to look forward to the fulfilment of the promise. He said not, however, how few they were to be, in order, it may be, that they might watch and be ever ready for the time when that promise should be fulfilled.²

Bengel.

Chrysostom.

For John truly baptized, but with water only, and so merely by the outward part of the sacrament, in submitting to which the baptized person made confession of former sin, and gave promise of the commencement of a new life. The baptism promised by Christ, however, was not merely a pledge on man's part of his repentance, but it was a special gift on the part of God.

Th. Aquinas,
Pars 3. q. 38.
a 3.

Ye shall be baptized by the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By this baptism of fire they were to receive the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, to strengthen them in the performance of their mission as the witnesses of Christ, and

Tirinus.

¹ "ὕδατι, with water, as the element by which, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, in the Holy Spirit, as the element in which, the baptism is performed. The inscription of ἐν may be slightly localizing with reference to a copious impartation of the Spirit's gifts and influences."—Jackett.

² "Non indicavit diem ut semper essent vigilantes. Qui in rebus spiritualibus certum sibi tempus assignant, quo se parent, vix bene se parant. Temporis angustii limitibus ne se coërcant, qui nullum in amore limitem novit."—Novarinus.

the first preachers of His Gospel.¹ Some have supposed these words to assert that the disciples of Christ had only received the baptism of John, and that the essential part of Christian baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit, had not been imparted unto them, but that they received this on the day of Pentecost. The whole Scripture narrative seems opposed to this interpretation. Nor is it necessarily implied in these words. We read, *After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judea: and there He tarried with them, and baptized; that is, as is explained shortly after, Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples.* It is therefore hardly likely that those who baptized others should not themselves have been first baptized by Christ, since their baptism, as we know, was distinct from that of the Baptist and his disciples. Hence it is usually understood that the baptism now promised was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for their sanctification and preparation for the mission of being preachers of the Gospel, and rulers of the flock of Christ; the promise of the extraordinary, rather than of the ordinary, graces given to all Christians. It was a baptism which should embue their whole soul with the zeal and power which the Holy Spirit imparts.

John iii. 22.

John iv. 2.

John iii. 26.

Corn. & Lap.

Dion. Carth.

Isaiah i. 26.
Dan. vii. 37.
Amos ix. 11.
Matt. xxiv. 3.

(6) *When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord,² wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

These words refer to a second meeting of the disciples with our Lord: the meeting spoken of in the previous verses probably took place on the Sunday before the Ascension. This is evident from a comparison of these verses with the parallel passage in the Gospel of the same writer. The narrative which follows refers to what took place on the day of the Ascension, when our Lord, having led the Apostles out *as far as to Bethany* and to the Mount of Olives, was taken up into heaven in their sight.³

Luke xxiv.
49, 50.

¹ "Βαπτίζεσθαι (1) indicat, *mergi*: (2) exprimit abundantiam et plenam copiam rei alicujus, *penitus imbui aliquareet circumdari*: sic Latini *mergi calamitatibus, negotiis, etc.*"—*Heinrich*.

See the note of Hammond in his Paraphrase at this place, who says: "This phrase βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι is clearly meant of the Holy Ghost, visible, descending upon the disciples."

² "Κύριε—O Lord. Jesus is often called in this book, written for Hellenists, by the name Κύριος, and (as Valck well observes) the word Κύριος in the LXX. version, read by the Hellenists, is used for Jehovah; 'ut adeo parum intersit (adds Valck), utrum Jesus Κύριος dicatur an Θεός.'"—*Wordsworth*.

³ "He led them out as far as Bethany. When He rose from the

The Apostles were still ignorant of the nature and character of that kingdom which Christ was about to establish. They still thought of a kingdom manifested by outward tokens and by worldly state and splendour. He had been *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, and their eyes were still so blind to the nature of that kingdom that they asked anxiously if He were *at this time* about to *restore again* the magnificence and influence exercised by David and by Solomon. They saw Him now going away, and when He was departing into heaven their hearts were still bowed down to the earth, and they were anxious to see the outward marks of the temporal rule which they expected He would at length exercise. In this we are taught lessons of Christian duty and charity; for if the humiliation of Christ and the fewness of the outward tokens of worldly greatness were stumbling-blocks to the disciples and the immediate followers of Christ, how much must the inconsistencies of Christians, and the consequent absence of the outward marks of God's presence, be hindrances to men now, and prevent their acceptance of the truth.

The carnal man looks forward to carnal blessings and to temporal riches: it is faith which alone enables us to fix our desires on eternal possessions and spiritual truths.

Lord, wilt Thou at this time? Before the resurrection of Christ the more usual name by which His disciples addressed Him was *Master*. After His resurrection, they more commonly addressed Him by this name, *Lord*. Their awe and reverence for the Saviour seem to have increased after His resurrection, when the weakness of the humanity was withdrawn from their eyes, and they saw around them the solemn tokens of their Master's Divine nature.

(7) *And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.*

dead, He appeared to His disciples, not only in Jerusalem, but also on the way to Bethany, at Galilee, on the mountain, and by the border of the Sea of Tiberias. Why, then, at His departing from them did He not summon them to Bethany, but Himself appeared at Jerusalem, and led them out as far as to Bethany? Doubtless,

since all the actions of Eternal Wisdom are significant, He did so in order to point out to them that, having come to His own and His own having rejected Him (John i. 11), Jerusalem was now to be left alone, deserted of that grace which it had so long time resisted."—*Archb. Philaret of Moscow, in Homilies.*

Cook.

Th. à Villanova.

Burkitt.

Quesnel.

Novarinus.

Matt. xxiv.
30.
Mark xlii. 32.
1 Thes. v. 1.

Lange.

Thus does our Blessed Lord check and reprove the inquiries of curiosity, and condemn the natural impatience of the unrestrained nature of man. *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons.*—By denying to them this knowledge He shows to them, and through them to us, that such knowledge in no way concerns our salvation, whilst at the same time He assures us that nothing which takes place is the effect of accident or chance or destiny, since all things the

Eumenius.

Father hath put in His own power.

Corn. & Lap.

By *times* is meant any period; by *seasons* some point, or piece, or time within that period.¹ The former word may be understood of the whole duration of the present dispensation; the latter word, of the termination of that time by the second coming of the Messiah, when the spiritual glory of the Church or kingdom of God will become visible in the manifestation of the sons of God, and the appearance of their Lord in power and great glory

Cook.

Luke xxiv.
48, 49.

John xv. 27.
Acts i. 22;
ii. 1, 4, 32.

(8) *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Isaiah li. 3.

Ps. cx. 2.

As it had been declared by the prophet that *Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*, and looking forth to the same event the Psalmist had said, *The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Zion*, so now that the new law is to go forth, our Lord commands His Apostles to be His *witnesses*, first in *Jerusalem*, and then in *Judæa*, and in *Samaria*, naming Samaria expressly that His Apostles might know from His mouth that these also whom the Jews hated and despised, were to be gathered into the one fold of Christ.

Patritius.

Though our Blessed Lord, in the words which preceded this, had denied to His Apostles the knowledge which was not necessary for them and which could not conduce to their salvation, He here promises them *power* to do His will, to fulfil His commands and to proclaim the message which

¹ "*Momenta* respondent Græco nomine *καιρός* quod significat rei gerendæ opportunitates." — *Lorinus*. "*Χρόνος* et *καιρός* habent hoc discrimen, ut indicent vel tempus et occasionem, vel tempus et articulum

temporis, . . . ut dicimus in vita communis *Zeit* und *Stunde*." — *Morus*.

"In *χρόνος* it is rather simple time that is expressed, *tempus*; in *καιρός* the relations and circumstances of time *opportunitas*." — *Olshausen*.

He had entrusted to them.¹ It is not mere knowledge, but the knowing and doing the will of God, which is the characteristic of the Christian. The Spirit is sent into our hearts not so much to enlighten our understanding, though this He does, nor to add to our consolations, though this is the effect of His indwelling, but in order to give us power to do the will of God, and to show forth His power to others.

Gorranus.

Novarinus.

The disciples of Christ were to be His *witnesses* to the world by the miracles which they worked, by the holiness of the lives which they led, by their preaching both by word of mouth and by their Epistles; and this witness they bore, and still bear, *unto the uttermost part of the earth.*² They were to be the *witnesses* of His resurrection and ascension: the one He had confirmed by many infallible proofs, the other was to be evidenced to their senses. He says not that they shall be *witnesses* of His passion and death upon the cross, for this humiliation of the Son of Man all men were ready to believe; what men are so ready to doubt, to question, and to deny is the exaltation of the Son of Man to the glory at the right hand of the Father, and therefore of this were the disciples made *witnesses*.

Menoehius.

Sylveira.

(9) *And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*

Luke xxiv. 51.
John vi. 62.
Acts i. 2.

Holy Scripture in many places speaks of *clouds* as the attendants upon God. *Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment: . . . who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations,*

Ps. civ. 2.

¹ "Loco regni terreni quod imaginamini, accipietis virtutem plenissimam et varia Chrismata è caelo in vos delatantia ad perficiendum opus, ad quod vos elegi. Non respondet Dominus directè ad discipulorum interrogationem, sed comprimendo eorum curiositatem, respondet aliud quod scire debebant et unde facile colligerent regnum illud Israël promissum non esse terrestre sed cœleste et spirituale."—*Fromond*.

"Sed accipietis dotes Spiritus Sancti, in vos demissi.—*Δύναμις* hoc loco significat dotes necessarias ad negotium docendi et gerendum munus Apostolicum."—*Rosenmüller*.

² "Dicta sunt de apostolorum testimonio, quod in universum terrarum orbem vel permeavit iam, vel certè ante omnium ætatum exitum permeabit."—*Patritius*.

Dan. vii. 13,
14.Matt. xxiv.
30.

Rev. i. 7.

and languages, should serve Him : His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Of the last judgment our Blessed Lord Himself says : Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And the beloved Apostle adds : Behold, He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him ; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.

There was a significancy in Christ ascending the mountain before *He was taken up* into heaven.¹ He could have ascended from the plain as well as from the height, but in this He did as in so many other instances during His ministry. He uses natural means so far as these extend, though in surpassing them He shows that He needed them not. He would in this teach us to use all the helps which He gives us, all natural instruments that can raise our souls. We must make use of natural reason and intellectual gifts so far as they will carry us, and only when these fail us must we rely upon supernatural assistance.

Novarinus.

John xi. 29.

Philaret.

No eye of man witnessed the resurrection of Christ from the tomb. It may be that mortal eye could not see the change of the natural body into the spiritual and resurrection body. It may be that this was hidden from the eyes of the Apostles because their faith was not yet matured for so great a sight, and because they were then unprepared for that higher blessedness which is granted to those who *have not seen and yet have believed*. Many, however, were privileged to be the witnesses of the ascension. Forty days the great Teacher had instructed His disciples in the truths concerning His kingdom. Forty days their faith had been tried and strengthened to understand and to behold Divine things, and now in reward for this their faith our Lord called His disciples to Him, and led them forth that they might be the witnesses of His glorious ascension to the realms of eternal glory. There is indeed a significancy in these words, *while they beheld, He was taken up*. They

¹ "Albæ vestes congruunt exaltationi, qui enim in nativitate apparuit humilis Deus, in ascensione ostenditur homo sublimis : quod etiam loca significant, quia in humili civitate natus, de sublimi monte regressus est ad celos."—*Gorranus*.

"Non subito raptus, non furtim sublatus sed videntibus illis elevatus est."—*S. Bernard*.

"Non raptus ut Elias ; non translatus ut Enoch ; quia ex Seipso levatus : non Angli adminiculo sed propria virtute subnixus."—*Lorinus*.

were to be taught by this ascension of Christ that the way into heaven was now open, and that all those who by faith should believe in Him, and by desire lay hold of Him, and by the spiritual eye should see Him, *the way, the truth, and the life*, should ascend whither He had but gone before. Yangas.

The ascension of Christ was glorious in the acknowledgment which the heavens gave to the majesty of our Lord's human nature: it was joyous, a cause of joy to us, in that it was the confirmation of our faith in His Divinity: it was fruitful, inasmuch as by His entry into heaven He gave to us the Spirit, to dwell for ever in our hearts, and He entered into His rest as the firstfruits and assurance of the *rest that remaineth to the people of God*.¹ His ascension into heaven strengthens our faith, our hope, and our love:— Heb. iv. 9.

(1) Our faith in the Divinity of Christ is made sure. We have seen Him ascending to that place where He was before. He who said, *I came down from heaven*, spake also of this ascension as the means by which the doubts of His disciples should be removed; for when they murmured at His saying, *I am the living Bread which came down from heaven*, He added, *Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?* His ascension was the declaration that He *came down from heaven*, and therefore that He *was there before* His Incarnation.² John vi. 38.

(2) Our hope in all His promises is strengthened. Where He is gone we shall also go, since He is but gone before us into heaven as our firstfruits, *to prepare a place for us*. John vi. 51, 61, 62.

(3) Our charity or love is inflamed. By His going up into heaven our hearts are raised in expectation to the same place; and our love is kindled by the fire, the Holy Spirit, which He sends down from thence. John xiv. 2.

¹ "Caroitura ad Patrem, quæ non erat à Patre prius, per gloriam resurrectionis omnem infirmitatem exiit. Accinxit se potentia amicta lumine sicut vestimento. . . . Caro Christi prius mole nostræ mortalitatis aggravata, postquam gloria et honore coronata est: postquam decorem et fortitudinem induit, cælos potenter ascendit. Descendit in carnem, ut carnales in carne doceret: ut eos de carne transferret ad spiritum. Unde et Apostolus dicit, innuens glorificationem carnis: *Et si cognovimus secundum carnem Christum: sed nunc jam*

non novimus." [2 Cor. v. 16.]—*Pet. Blessensis.*

² "Quod nubes Ejus conspectum prius abstulit, quam in cœlestem gloriam intraret, id eo factum videtur, ut suo modulo contenti altius inquirere desinerent. Nos quoque docemur sub discipulorum persona, non esse tantam mentis nostræ perspicaciam, ut ad gloriæ Christi altitudinem conscendat. Nubes igitur ista sit coercendæ nostræ audaciæ obstaculum, non secus ac fumus tabernaculi atrium occupans sub lege."—*Calvin.*

A cloud received Him. Thus did the material heavens acknowledge the Maker of heaven and earth. The earth had recognized Him as its Lord when at His voice it gave up Lazarus from the tomb, and when at His crucifixion *the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.* The sea had already acknowledged in Him its ruler when at His command its waters were stilled, and when He walked upon its surface as upon dry ground. The powers of darkness had acknowledged Him as their superior when at His word the devils were cast out from men, and He healed all them that were possessed with unclean spirits. Men—even His enemies—recognized in Him a power greater than that of mere man, and acknowledged that He spake as never man spake, and that He was indeed the eternal Son of God. In this place we have the recognition of the material heavens, and of the rendering of their homage to the Saviour as well as to the Maker of the world—*a cloud received Him*

Ofentimes when the Christian lifts up his eyes to Christ with intense longing for His presence, and meditates with joy upon all that He has done and said, He is lost to the sight which is fixed upon Him; ¹ *a cloud receives Him*, and shuts out the sight of Christ even from the eyes of the faithful worshipper. The troubles and anxieties of life shut out heaven from our eyes, and turn them too often upon the earth. Christ is, however, let us remember, still there, even though we see Him not. If our mortal sight cannot penetrate to Him, it is because He is in heaven at the right hand of power, to aid us and to lift us to Him. There may faith follow and lay hold of Him, though sight fails because *a cloud has received Him out of our sight.*

(10) *And while they looked stedfastly² toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;*

¹ "Stæpe enim per sancta desideria, et altam contemplationem, in corde suo oculos ad Christum elevant, atque ipsum intuentur: sed brevi tempore quasi nube quadam Christus suscipitur ab oculis eorum, et opposita nube, aut necessitatum aut negotiorum hujus vitæ, coguntur oculos avertere à cælestibus, et ad terram convertere, ita ut possint cum Hieremia, deplorando calamitatem suam, dicere Domino, *Opposuisti nubem tibi, ne transeat oratio* [Thren. iii. 44]. Quasi nubes enim

opponitur inter Christum et ipsos caro ipsa corruptibilis, quæ aggravat animam, et cura temporalis necessitatum hujus vitæ, ut in oratione et sancta contemplatione interiores oculi animæ ad Deum amplius procedere et transire non possint."—*Yngas.*

² "Ἀρενίζοντες — *intentis oculis rectis*: 'tendere oculos,' Lucret. i. 67; 'tendens lumina,' Virg. Æn. ii. 405; one of the words used only by St. Luke (iv. 20, xxii. 56; Acts iii. 4; and eight other times in the Acts—iii.

Matt. xxvii.
51.

Matt. viii.
26; xiv.
26.

Luke viii. 26
—35.

Mark f. 27.

John vii. 46.

Matt. xxvii.
54.

Bernard.

Eccles. xxxv.
21.

Yngas.

Matt. xxviii.
3.

Mark xvi. 5.
Luke xxiv. 4.

John xx. 12.
Acts x. 3, 30.

Whilst the Apostles were gazing upon Him in the intensity of their love, and were looking *steadfastly toward heaven*, behold, a strange and unwonted sight; *two men* were standing by their side, coming they knew not how, they saw not whence. They did but see that there *stood by them* angels in human form, in witness to the reality of His manhood, who, although He was very God, yet had really taken man's nature upon Him. Angels in the likeness of *men*, the messengers and ministers of God, in order that they might strengthen the faith of the disciples. *Two*, in order that they might be sufficient as witnesses to this mighty fact, that He who had descended from heaven had also gone again into heaven; for *in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established*.

Let us note here the mercy of Christ, who is ever dealing with His people in the same way. When He withdraws His visible presence from His people, He leaves them not without other consolations. He sends them His angels, to witness to His abiding presence amongst them, even though the eyes of His servants are holden and they see Him not.

They *stood by them in white apparel*. As soldiers who, in white garments, attended their general in his triumph, so do the angels of God attest the triumph of the Redeemer of mankind¹ in *white*, in glorious apparel. In the same way do His saints bear witness now to the reality of His ascension by the purity of their lives, by the spotlessness of that robe of righteousness with which their Saviour has clothed them.²

(11) *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.*

Our Lord shall *so come* in the body—in the same body with which He went up; suddenly and unexpectedly, for *while*

12, vi. 15, vii. 55, x. 4, xi. 6, xiii. 9, xiv. 9, xxiii. 1); and by St. Paul (2 Cor. iii. 7, 13). One of the numerous evidences, from diction, of the identity of St. Luke with the author of the Acts, and of his connection with St. Paul."—*Wordsworth*.

¹ "In vestimentis albis—quia prospera nunciabant, et lætitiā angelorum de societate humanæ naturæ significa-

bant."—*Gorranus*.

² See Baruch v. 2, and Revel. xix. 8, ἐδόθη αὐτῇ . . βύσσινον καθαρὸν καὶ λαμπρόν· τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον, τὰ δικαϊώματά ἐστι τῶν ἁγίων.—δικαϊώματα—"righteous acts." *Locke in Paraph.* Confer Matt. xxii. 11; xxviii. 3; Mark xvi. 5; Luke xxiv. 4; John xx. 12.

Leigh.

Novarinus.

Epiphanius, Orat. de Ascen. Matt. xviii. 16.

Ferus.

Novarinus.

Dan. vii. 13. Matt. xxiv. 30. Mark xiii. 26. Luke xxi. 27. John xiv. 3. Acts ii. 7; xiii. 31. 1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 16. 2 Thess. i. 10. Rev. i. 7.

Chrysostom.

Luke xxiv.
51.

Hugo de S.
Charo. —

Rev. i. 7.

Philaret.
Matt. xxv.
34.

Chrysostom.

Novarinus.

Th. à Villa-
nova.

Ps. xxxiv. 8.

He blessed them—when speaking to them—He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. He shall come in like manner, by His own almighty power—angels and me being present as the witnesses of His coming—and with majesty amidst the clouds of heaven: in like manner, for as He was taken up from the midst of his faithful disciples whilst in the act of blessing them, so will He come in like manner to complete that act of blessing, and to give them that joy of which they had then the promise, that joy of which the foretaste is experienced by the Christian now, to whom Christ comes in blessing, and of which the fulfilment shall be made when He shall say to them, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

This going up of Christ, this taking up of the body by the power of the Divine nature for ever united to it, was a true ascension, not an assumption of the body by any other power than that which He Himself possessed.

Why stand ye gazing into heaven? With these words these angels from heaven aroused the Apostles from their inactive amazement—*Why stand ye gazing?* As though they would say to them, Why pass your lives in contemplation, in piercing into the mysteries of the unseen? This is not the Christian's whole duty. Show forth the truth of the words of the Saviour, the greatness of that power that is in you through the indwelling of the Spirit which He has given to you, not by looking regretfully at Him who has departed for a season from you, but by going forth and witnessing of all which He did and said to you, and by preaching and suffering for Him.¹ Let the sight of the glory of your Lord move you to go on in the work of your mission; let the assurance that He will come again *in like manner* as He is gone *into heaven* sustain you under the sufferings and disappointments of your ministry on earth, since He will come to gather to Him all those whose hearts are fixed on Him, and whose deeds manifest Him in the sight of an ungodly world.

He who has tasted *how gracious the Lord is*, knows how great a void His absence leaves in the heart of the believer; such a void did He leave in the company of His Apostles when He was withdrawn in bodily presence from amongst them. Let this withdrawal and the promise of Christ's return, however, encourage all the members of His Body to en-

¹ "Videte ascendentem, credite ab- tite præsentem."—Augustine in Ps.
sentem, sperate venientem, sed tamen xlv.
per misericordiam occultam etiam sen-

sure the trials which He sends in order to strengthen their faith. If now He who is the way by which the Christian is to walk, and the desire of the Christian's heart, seems to be far off from him, to hide Himself and to leave the soul of the believer destitute, or even to afflict the soul which yet finds its greatest consolation in His presence; if the eye of the soul grow weary with trying to penetrate the clouds which are around His throne, and is tempted to despair amid trials which are incomprehensible to him; let these words comfort the weary soul, and strengthen it in the midst of sorrow: *this same Jesus, which is taken up from you, who is hidden from your eyes, and reveals not Himself by any sensible tokens of His presence, is not gone away from you for ever, He will come again in like manner as ye have seen Him, and make Himself known to you, and fill your heart with the consolations which come from his indwelling.*¹

Philaret.

Note here the precision with which the manner of our Lord's coming is stated: *He shall so come in like manner*² as ye have seen Him go. That is—

(1) As Christ ascended visibly into heaven, so when He comes again *every eye shall see Him!*

(2) As a cloud received Him out of the sight of His disciples, so shall He come *with the clouds* of heaven. Rev. i. 7.

(3) As angels encompassed the Saviour in His ascent to heaven, so when He comes again to this earth He *in like manner* will be attended by angels. And yet with all this precision as to the manner of His second advent, we have not one word, not one indication of the time of our Lord's second coming, in order that, not knowing the hour of His return, we may be upon the watch every hour of our lives.³

Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. . If He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

Luke xii. 37, 38.
[End of
Epistle for
the day of the
Ascension.]

(12) *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.*⁴

Luke xxiv. 52.

¹ "Veniet vobis non terribilis qui profectus est desiderabilis vobis in amore; impiis in tremore, cum nube et signo crucis apparente in cælo."—Augustine.

² "ὡς τρόπον, in what manner, i. e. visibly and in the air (Beng., De Wet., Mey., Olsh.). The expression is here employed to affirm merely the certainty of one event as compared with another.

The assertion, that the meaning is simply that as Christ had departed so also He would return, is contradicted by every passage in which the phrase occurs; see vii. 28; Matt. xxiii. 27; Luke xiii. 34; 2 Tim. iii. 8."—Hackett.

³ "Ideo latet ultimus dies, ut ob-serventur omnes dies."—Augustine.

⁴ So long as the Israelites were in

Then, that is, when they had heard the words of the angels and had been comforted with the assurance that Christ would again come to this world, they returned unto Jerusalem in obedience to the commands of Christ, who had bidden them tarry . . . in the city of Jerusalem until . . . endued with power from on high. They no longer stand . . . gazing up into heaven in the contemplation of their Lord, but prepare themselves for the duties which their Master had laid upon them. Obedience to the commands of our Lord is at all times a higher duty and a greater virtue than even contemplating Him and spending our time in meditating upon Him.

Chrysostom.

Luke xxiv.
49.

Quesnel.

Mons trium
luminum.Ludolph in
Vita
Christi.

The mountain was called *Olivet*, from the olive grounds which covered a large portion of its slopes.¹ It is spoken of by some writers as the mountain of threefold light, as yielding light and being perpetually lighted, for its western side was illuminated at night by the reflected fires of the temple, its eastern side was irradiated by the sun at its rising; again, the oil which it bore was used for giving light.² And there was an appropriateness in the ascension of our Lord from this mount Olivet.

(1) In the groves of olives on its slope His passion commenced, and here it was He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Here He was taken by the band of armed men led by His own disciple, and was exposed to the indignities of sinners. Here now His majesty and glory is evidenced, and we are taught that the sufferings and reproaches un-

Luke xxii. 44.

the desert a Sabbath day's journey was reckoned at twelve miles, the extent of the camp. Before, however, they had settled in Canaan, it began to be limited to two thousand cubits, the distance between the tabernacle and the tents of the people. This measure was eventually adopted by the rabbins, and is what is here meant.—*Lightfoot in loco.* "Iter Sabbati plerique Judæi definiunt bis mille ulnis, i. e. mille passibus: nam passus duplex ulna. Syr. *Septem circiter stadies.*"—*Rosenmüller.*

¹ "The usual name of the mountain is ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν. The name here employed, ὄρος τοῦ ἐλαιῶνος, is only to be found in this passage of the New Testament; it occurs, however, in Josephus, Ant. vii. 9, 2. The word comes from ἐλαῖων, olivetum, a place planted with olive trees. The LXX use it for Ἱ. Exod. xxiii. 11."—*Olshausen.* "The

olives which give it its name have now nearly disappeared, but some still remain, some of very great age, on the western declivity."—*Cook.* "And thus vindicate the propriety of the ancient name."—*Hackett.*

² "Victo principe tenebrarum Salvator in locum pacis et luminis fideles inducit, montem charismatis ascendit, spiritum promissurus, cujus unctio docet de omnibus, 1 Joan. ii. 20. Mons etenim Oliveti, mons luminum dicitur, trium, scilicet lucernæ de templo resplendentis [de nocte illuminabatur igne templi, ubi erat ignis jugis in altari.—*Lorinus*]. Solis ab opposito orientis, et olei in ipso monte crescenti, quæ tria habet Ecclesia scilicet verbi Dei lucem, Solis justitiæ fulgorem et conscientiæ puritatem."—*Hugo de S. Charo.*

deservedly heaped upon the head of the righteous will be turned into the means of triumph.

(2) Here He was accustomed to withdraw for prayer throughout the night, keeping vigils for us sinners, thus teaching us that through prayer and watching shall we ascend to that heaven whither He has gone to prepare a place for us. Novarinus.

As Christ ascended from the mount, let us remember that he who would ascend into heaven must rise above the level of earth and of mere earthly affections. As He ascended from *Olivet*, from the mount of mercies—for the olive is the symbol of grace and mercy—so is it of God's grace and of His mercy alone that heaven is opened to us. It was this grace and mercy which strengthened the Apostles and gave them courage to obey their Lord's command in returning to the city where He had suffered, and from which the disciples were soon to be driven by persecution. They acted in simple obedience to His will, and confident in His protection, *returned* into the midst of those who had shed His blood, and He defended them and enabled them to fulfil His will by making known His gospel to those who had come up to the feast. Ferus.
Acts viii. 1, 4.
Hoffmeister.

The place from whence our Lord ascended, and which is probably marked by the site of the church of the Ascension, is distant from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey, or two thousand cubits. It was within the confines of the district of Bethany, but not so far from Jerusalem as the village where Lazarus and his sisters dwelt, which lay at the foot of the mountain on its eastern side.¹ Cook.
Calovius.

¹ Bethphage and Bethany are names given to the two tracts of country lying the one on the western and the other on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet. On the summit of this mountain, at a point which is just an English mile from the church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Empress Helena erected a church to mark the site of our Lord's ascension. Here is the line which separates the two districts of the mountain, at the exact distance of a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem. At this point commenced the triumphant procession of Christ into the Holy City, and here—as far as to Bethany—He led His disciples, and from it in their presence ascended into heaven. The village of Martha and Mary, the modern Aziriyeh, called as early as the sixth century Lazariotæ, is usually supposed to be the

ancient Bethany. There is, however, little evidence of the existence of any village bearing this name, though as the district of Bethany contained many small villages, one of them may possibly have borne the same name as the district itself. As, however, the village of Martha and Mary on the eastern base of the mountain is fifteen furlongs, or about two Sabbath days' journey, from Jerusalem, this cannot be the place meant as that from which our Lord ascended. The words of St. Luke are precise. He tells us that our Lord led His disciples *as far as to Bethany*, ἕως εἰς βηθανίαν—that is, to the very confines of Bethany, not to the village—if such there were—which bore that name but to the boundary of the district, and so outside of the city, for Bethphage was reckoned a suburb

Matt. x. 2, 3, 4.
 Luke vi. 15;
 xxiv. 52.
 Acts ix. 37, 39;
 xx. 8.
 Jude 1.

(13) *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

Fromond.

When they were come into Jerusalem, they went up into the upper room (εἰς τὸ ὑπερφῶν) of the house where abode the Apostles. Some have conjectured that this was a room in

Hammond.

one of the courts of the temple. This, however, is unlikely, since the disciples would hardly be sheltered there. The conjecture indeed arose from regard to the words of St. Luke in his Gospel, when, speaking of the return of the disciples to Jerusalem, he says *they were continually in the temple.* This, however, is unduly to press the literal meaning of these words. Our Blessed Lord says of Himself, *I ever taught in the temple*, but this does not mean that

Luke xxiv.
 53.

John xviii.
 20.

Acts ii. 1.

Whitby.

Fromond.

He never taught elsewhere, nor that He dwelt there. Again, we read of Peter and John that they *went up into the temple*, words which are hardly appropriate of those who dwelt in an upper room in the precincts of the temple itself.¹ Others with more reason have thought that it was the same *upper room* in which the last supper was partaken of by the disciples of Christ on the night of their Master's betrayal. There is no reason why this should not be true, though there is no evidence that it is so. The word, *the upper room*, has been thought to imply that the Apostles abode in a certain well-known upper room, but the definite article only means that it was *the upper room* of the house in which they dwelt.²

In the three lists of the Apostles, the order in which their names are given is not regarded. St. Peter, however, always stands first. There are many indications throughout the Gospels and Acts of a pre-eminence of rank accorded to this Apostle. The fact, however, of his name stand-

of Jerusalem. See *Ritter's Geography of Palestine*, Eng. trans. vol. iii. p. 5, and iv. pp. 24, 213; and *Lightfoot in loco*.

¹ "A Syriac scholiast (Syr. MS. in Act. Apost. in Arch. Biblioth., Bodleianæ) upon the place saith, that it was the same upper room in which they had eaten the passover."—*Gregory's Notes and Observations*, p. 7.

² *The upper room* of an Eastern

house does not necessarily mean a room at the top of the house, but a room thrown up above the level of the house, and reserved for the reception of distinguished guests—"that part of the house which was highest from the ground" (*Gregory's Notes and Observations*, p. 17). It is oftentimes higher by a few steps only than the rest of the apartments, and is frequently ascended from the outside of the house.

ing first, here and elsewhere, adds but little, if it adds aught, to other evidence. Here we are reminded that if this be any argument, we should then be driven to deny any pre-eminence to the blessed Virgin, since the name of Mary stands not only after the names of all the Apostles, but also after *the women* who were with her. In truth, the order in which the names are recorded has no force whatever, and the pre-eminence of St. Peter rests on more solid evidence than this. Calvin.

James, afterwards the bishop of Jerusalem, is spoken of as the son of Alphæus, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee and the brother of John;¹ and Judas again as *the brother of James*, to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ. *Simon Zelotes*, or Simon the Canaanite, has the second name to distinguish him from Simon Peter. He is called Zelotes, according to the more usual opinion, because Cana, his birth-place, means zealous,² though others have supposed that he derived his name from having belonged to the Zealots, a body distinguished for their fanatical adherence to the law of Moses. Lyra. Gangeius.

Peter, and James, and John. In the account of their call to be the Apostles of Christ, the order in which their names occur is different from this. Then it was *Peter and Andrew, John and James*, the order of nature. Now it is different. There is a bond of nature and a bond of grace, and the disciples are here spoken of as bound together by the chains of spiritual love and of spiritual duty. To us there is a deep practical lesson yielded by the enumeration of the names of the Apostles, the chosen witnesses of Christ. If Peter, who in the hall of the Roman governor denied his Lord with an oath; if Thomas, who refused so long to believe in the fact of His resurrection; if all those who *forsook Him and fled* from Him in the hour of danger, were yet forgiven and made His messengers, who can doubt of that forgiveness, which He has promised to all who forsake their sins and return to Him. Matt. x. 2. Luke vi. 14. Hugo de S. Charo. Matt. xxvi. 56. Euthymius.

¹ James, called the Less (Mark xv. 40), the son of Clophas; for Mary, who is called by St. Mark the mother of James the Less, is called by St. John (xix. 25) the wife of Clophas. Cleophas Alphæus and Clophas are only two sounds of the same Hebrew word *קלפאס* (*Lightfoot*), and as Mary is called by St. John His mother's sister, James the Less, called also the Just, was the cousin of our Incarnate Lord, or, as he is elsewhere called, according to He-

brew idiom, the Lord's brother (Gal. i. 19). See *Mill on the Mythological Interpretation of Scripture*, chap. ii. sect. 5.

² "Simon Zelotes. See Matt. x. 4. He is called the Canaanite by St. Matthew and St. Mark iii. 18, but Zelotes (the Greek synonyme for Canaanite) by St. Luke vi. 15, as here: a mark of connection between the authors of St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts."—*Wordsworth*.

Matt. xiii. 55.
 Luke xxiii.
 49, 55;
 xxiv. 10.
 Acts ii. 1, 46.

(14) *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,¹ with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.*

The women who had stood by the cross of Christ, and who had gone to the sepulchre with spices, these were there. And then, singling out *the mother of Jesus*, St. Luke notes that she also was there. Some would read wives (*γυναῖξί*), instead of women merely, and hence say that Mary is named apart as not being a wife. This, however, is not the usual interpretation of this word.² Mary without doubt is here mentioned apart because she was *blessed* above all others, in that she was chosen to be *the mother of Jesus*. From this point we lose sight of her in the Holy Scriptures, this is the last time that her name is mentioned. When the disciples were for a moment scattered, then the beloved Apostle *took her*, in obedience to the charge of Christ, unto *his own home*. Now, however, when the Lord had re-assembled the Apostles and disciples after His resurrection, then Mary seems to have abode with the whole body.

In the Jewish service the women worshipped apart from the men, separated from them, in a particular court of the temple set aside for this purpose, and called 'the court of the women.' The same separation was observed even in the synagogues. But now, when He who was born of a woman had come to gather all into one, there is no longer *male nor female*, and the veil of separation is torn away, and all worship Him in one place.

And with the Apostles and *the women* were assembled the *brethren* of Christ, the relations, whether on the side of Joseph, the husband of Mary, or on the side of Mary herself. These were not brethren or brothers in the sense which we affix to the word. Had they been so, the Saviour would not have committed His mother to the care of the beloved disciple. In this notice of the presence of the *brethren* of Christ amongst those who had *returned* from the Mount of Ascen-

¹ "The word *ἁποθυμαδόν*, here and in chap. ii. 1, 46, is worthy of notice: it is only to be found once in the other books of the New Testament, viz. in Romans xv. 6. It denotes that oneness of life in the disciples which was displayed in a living community of feeling and consciousness."—*Olshausen*.

² "*σὺν γυναῖξί*—*cum mulieribus* ut Vulg. Alii *cum uxoribus*, quas illi

quidem de uxoribus apostolorum interpretantur, quos non satis causæ habere recte arbitrat, *Boisius* in *Collatione* ad., h. l. p. 351. Has enim si tantum voluisset Lucas, scripsisset potius: *σὺν ταῖς γυναῖξιν αὐτῶν*. Itaque non solum Apostolorum uxores, sed et aliæ mulieres, Christum viventem consecratæ, per *γυνάϊας* rectissime hic comprehenduntur."—*Wolffius*.

sion, and were present with the faithful followers of Christ; we have another evidence of the power of His resurrection, since those who had so long time refused to accept Him as the Messiah, the sent of God, were now numbered amongst the believers. Chrysostom.

These all continued with one accord—They continued in prayer and supplication. In this we have the sedulous care, the earnestness, and perseverance of the Apostles pointed out. Elsewhere, the same grace is spoken of as being *instant in prayer*, and as *prayer which was made without ceasing of the church unto God*. And to this Christ Himself exhorts us in teaching us, *that men ought always to pray and not to faint*. They continued in prayer, and they continued *with one accord*, showing unanimity in their meeting together, and unity of heart and devotion when they had assembled, a unanimity which is in itself a powerful weapon against all the temptations of the Evil One. This oneness of outward and of inward agreement is elsewhere noted, when we are told that the *multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul*, and *had all things common*. In this concord of the first followers of Christ, we see the fruit of Christ's teaching, *This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you*; and also the effect of Christ's prayer, *that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me*. This was the legacy that He left to all His true disciples, *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you*; and this He gave to His Apostles, when breathing on them He said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. For the same reason, to show the oneness of believers, the children of one Father, Christ taught us all to pray *Our Father*. Rom. xii. 12.
Acts xii. 5.
Luke xviii. 1.
Lorinus.
Cook.
Chrysostom.
Acts iii. 32.
John xv. 12.
John xvii. 21.
John xiv. 27.
John xx. 22.
Wordsworth.
Matt. vi. 9.
Luke xi. 2.
Lorinus.

These were all awaiting the fulfilment of Christ's promise that He would send to them the Comforter; and as they waited the Holy Ghost came down upon them, thus prepared to receive this great gift from above. In this assuring us that concord and prayer best dispose the heart for the reception of His Holy Spirit. Mariana.

(15) *And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names¹ together were² about an hundred and twenty,)* Rev. iii. 4.
[Epistle for
St. Matthias'
day, verses
15—26.]

¹ ὄνομα: the name is here employed to denote the person himself. The word is used in the same manner in Rev. iii. 4, where it stands plainly for

ἄνθρωποι. Among profane authors this use is only to be found in poetical diction."—*Olshausen*.

² ἦν τε ὁχλος—"The very frequent

The remainder of the chapter from this point, contains the account of the appointment of a disciple to take the place amongst the apostles vacated by the treason and death of Judas. There seemed to the rest of the apostles and to the body of the disciples a necessity to complete the original number, and to add one to the eleven apostles. How far this was in accordance with the injunction of Christ we are not told, though we may well believe that such an act, immediately after the ascension, and without waiting for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in fulfilment of their Lord's promise, must have been done by His direction. Why this number twelve so constantly recurs in Holy Scripture we know not. It is significant that this should be the case, and, from the twelve apostles and the anxiety of the disciples to fill up this surely sacred number, we are carried back to the twelve sons of Jacob, the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

When these were commencing their wanderings in the desert of Sinai, the type of the wanderings of those who are *strangers and pilgrims* upon earth, it was from the twelve fountains at Elim that they drew water to quench their natural thirst, as the thirst of man's soul is quenched by the doctrine which is declared by the twelve apostles of Christ. The *twelve stones* which Joshua took out of Jordan, and, by divine command, set up in Gilgal, were at once memorials of the twelve tribes and the lively images of those stones which, built upon the One Rock, should be the foundation of the Christian Church. The twelve stones in the breast-plate of the high priest were, in like manner, memorials of the tribes of Israel and types of those twelve who were the companions and brethren of Christ upon earth. If twelve men were selected to go forward and spy out the land of Canaan and to bring their report to the rest of God's people, the twelve apostles were in like manner commissioned to go before and to lead men to that Celestial Canaan whither the Lord's hosts are marching. The twelve lions which stood around the throne of Solomon, the son of David, were types of those twelve who surrounded the person of Him who was the *Son of David*, and who shall hereafter *sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. Again, the twelve oxen on which stood the brazen laver with that water which was an image of the

Heb. xi. 13.
Exod. xv. 27.
Joshua iv. 20.
Exod. xxviii. 21.
Numb. xiii. 1-25.
Phil. iii. 20.
1 Kings x. 20.
Matt. xix. 28.

use of $\tau\epsilon$ is a peculiarity of the Acts, and should have its weight in determining the reading, even where, as here, $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ seems more appropriate. It occurs

in the Gospel five times: in the Acts, 121."—*Alford*. "It rarely occurs in the New Testament, out of the Acts and the writings of Paul."—*Hackett*.

regenerating waters of baptism, were types of that band of twelve apostles whom our Lord commissioned to go and baptize all the nations. These twelve were the *twelve stars* which St. John saw in the crown of the Church, the *twelve foundations* on which were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, the *twelve gates* through which men should enter into the New Jerusalem, which gates were guarded by *twelve angels*, whilst the gates themselves bore the names of the *twelve tribes of Israel*. The constant recurrence of the number twelve points to some mystery connected with it. It is, then, no wonder that the apostles and brethren should thus, early in the history of the Church, meet and complete the number of the twelve apostles by the election of Matthias.

In those days,—between the ascension of Christ and Pentecost, whilst bidden to remain in Jerusalem, and to expect the coming of the Comforter,—Peter, as the chief or the most ardent amongst the apostles, stood up in the midst of the disciples or brethren as one with them with whom he was now consulting.¹ And the number of the names of those present at this assembly were about an hundred and twenty,² the chief, it may be, amongst the disciples, though not the whole number, since St. Paul tells us Christ before His ascension was seen by five hundred brethren at once.

Of these disciples there are two points to be noted.

(1) They were *together* in heart as well as in the place of assembly, a mark of the early disciples of Christ at all times, an example for the disciples of Christ through all ages.

(2) They were waiting for the promise of the Father. God constantly prepares men for the reception of His grace by making them wait, by filling them with a longing and a desire for His promise, and when they so wait He gives them the blessing promised.

(16) *Men and brethren,³ this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.*

¹ "In medio : non in aliquo primario, velut superexcellenti loco, sed in medio, ut unus ex ipsis."—*Sylveira*.

² "ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό means not that they were so many collectively, but that so many came together at that time; see

ii. 1; iii. 1; 1 Cor. xi. 20; xiv. 23."—*Hackett*.

³ "ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί—men brethren : the ἄνδρες is not superfluous, but renders the address more respectful."—*Hackett*.

1 Kings vii. 25.

Matt. xxviii. 19.

Rev. xii. 1.

Rev. xxi. 14.

Rev. xxi. 12.

Royard.

Salmeron.

Lange.

1 Cor. xv. 6.

Hugo de S. Charo. Chrysostom.

Acts i. 4.

Stier.

Ps. xli. 9. Luke xxii. 47. John xiii. 18. John xviii. 3.

This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, since they are His words which cannot fail. This is the mark of the Holy Scriptures, that they are so true that whatever is predicted in them must of necessity be fulfilled, and if all must be true, so that which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake. Here we have the most direct assertion of the inspiration of the book of the Psalms, and what is written there must be true because it proceeds from the Holy Ghost, though spoken by the mouth of David. Here, again, we have an instance of that which is characteristic of Holy Scripture, its germinant meaning. The words of David were spoken with immediate reference to Ahitophel, and his treason and suicide, yet as the persecuted king of Israel was a type of that King of Israel who was delivered to His enemies by the treason of His friend and Apostle, so was David's friend Ahitophel the type of the traitor which was guide to them that took Jesus.

Lyra.
Hofmeister.
Cook.
Hofmeister.
Matt. xxvi.
50.
Lange.

He was *guide to them*,¹—the officers of the chief priests and scribes, the soldiers *that took Jesus*. Note here the absence of all passion, the gentle way in which the sin of the Apostle is spoken of by Peter. No concealment of his terrible fall, and yet no invective even from this ardent Apostle. He says not, "This wicked one, this traitor," but, he whose sin it was that he became the *guide to them that took his Master*; and yet there is a terrible force in these words. Judas was a *guide*, selected by his Master to *guide* those who desired to see Jesus and to know the power of His salvation, but made by his own sinful heart a *guide* to those who came to crucify Him. His sin was indeed far greater than theirs whom he guided to sin.² How often are the enemies of Christ those of His own household. How frequently since the days of Judas have the guides of evil been numbered amongst His ministers.³ The fall of the Apostle is recorded to teach us—

Hofmeister.
John xii. 21.
Stier.
Quesnel.

(1) That in this life the evil will ever be mingled with the good; amongst the twelve was one who betrayed his Lord.

(2) To beware of all self-confidence, and to warn us against trusting in our nearness to Christ, as though for that

¹ τοῦ γενομένου ὁδηγοῦ—He became guide, made himself so. It was his own act. The word means more than simply *was*.

² "Fuit dux viæ illorum, id est docens commodam viam Jesum sine turbis capiendi, ut docet Matth. Et væ omnibus malorum inventoribus, quia partem

habent in omnibus peccatis aliorum, quæ suo exemplo admiserunt, cadentque simul cum aliis, quos præcipitant in foveam."—*Salmeron*.

³ "Non est gravius peccatum quam aliis esse ὁδηγὸν peccati: Væ Ministris, Væ Parentibus, Væ Magistratibus, qui hoc faciunt."—*Craddock*.

reason we need not fear to fall, since if we sin in despite of His grace our fall will be but the greater.¹ As in heaven the angels of God fell and were cast out, as in Paradise Eve was tempted and fell, so did one of the twelve apostles of Christ make utter shipwreck of his faith and lose his trust in his Master. Only in His sustaining grace, not in the privileges to which we have been admitted, is there safety.

(3) That the possession of worldly wealth is a snare to the most highly-favoured amongst the followers of Christ, as the possession and care of the purse was a snare to Judas.² Royard.

(17) *For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part*³ *of this ministry.* Matt. x. 4. Luke vi. 16. Acts i. 25; xii. 25; xx. 24; xxi. 19.

He was numbered with us, not with you, the followers of Christ only, but *us*, the apostles. *He was numbered with us*, though he was not of us, not of the number of those who were the faithful followers of Christ. *He was numbered with us*, and therefore had all the advantages which we have in our nearness to our Lord,—the same teaching, the same example of love. *And had obtained part* (ἔλαχε τὸν κλῆρον) or lot in *this ministry*. He says not this apostolate, this oversight or superintendence of the flock, but he uses the more humble word, *this ministry* or service.⁴ Stier. Novarinus. Hofmeister.

He had obtained part or lot in *this ministry*. It was allotted to him. He did not obtain it by any natural right, not by any qualification within him, not by succession, but by lot from God. It was of His will and His grace who assigned to Judas his lot as He did to the Levites of old.⁵ Menochius. Chrysosom.

¹ "Quanto status altior, tanto casus ravior est."—Royard.

² "D'un des chefs du troupeau de Jesus Christ devenir le chef de ceux qui le rendent captif et le livrent à ses ennemis: quel changement! Plût à Dieu qu'il ne fût arrivé qu'une fois; et que le traître et apostat n'eût jamais eu de successeurs."—Quesnel.

³ ἔλαχε τὸν κλῆρον—"κλῆρος denotes a lot, then whatever is distributed by lot, as נַחֲלָה, and then generally that which is distributed; here it means a thing conferred by God, which of course implies that the individual who had received the special blessing was laid

under special obligations to God in return."—Olshausen.

⁴ "κλῆρος dicitur quicquid alicui obvenit, sicut hereditaria sola sorte dividebantur. Sunt quidam κληροὶ ἁγίων sortes sanctorum, ad quos omnes pertinent Christiani, Col. i. 12; 1 Pet. v. 3. Sunt et κληροὶ διακονίας sortes ministerii, ad quos Pastores: inde natum nomen clericorum."—Grotius.

⁵ "Clericus qui Christi servit ecclesiae, interpretetur primo vocabulum suum et nominis definitione prolata, nitatur esse quod dicitur. Si enim κλῆρος Græce, sors Latine appellatur: propterea vocantur clerici, vel quia de

Matt. xxvi.
15; xxvii.
5, 7, 8.
2 Pet. ii. 15.

(18) *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.*

e. g. Olshausen,
Heelen,
Calvin,
Kuinoel.

It has been suggested by some modern critics that this and the next verse are not a part of the speech of St. Peter, but an explanatory note inserted by St. Luke, since it would be needless for the Apostle to go into such details when speaking to those who knew the history of Judas's treason, and despair, and death. But this criticism overlooks the apparent reason for noticing these details, which was not to inform those to whom the words were addressed of the fate of Judas, but to note and to call their attention to the fulfilment of the prophecy *which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas.*

Stier.

Chrysostom.

Wordsworth.

This man purchased a field. We need not suppose that Judas sold Christ in order to obtain money to buy this field,—this is in the highest degree improbable,—but that with the *thirty pieces of silver* which he brought back to the priests, and, on their refusal to receive them cast them down in the temple, the priests themselves bought this *field*. To purchase only means to acquire or get,¹ and this *field* was obtained through his act. Holy Scripture traces back this fact to him who was the cause of its being so acquired, and assigns it to him. It was acquired by Judas—

(1) Because it was his money which was paid for its purchase.²

sorte sunt Domini, vel quia ipse Dominus sors, id est pars, clericorum est. Qui autem vel ipse pars Domini est vel Dominum partem habet, talem se exhibere debet ut et ipse possideat Dominum et possideatur à Domino.”—*Hieron. Ep. ad Nepot. De Vita Clericorum.*

¹ “Οὗτος μὲν οὖν ἐκτήσατο χωρίον. Recte observarunt interpretes, illud κτήσασθαι, hoc loco, non esse possidere, sed occasionem dare alicujus rei emendæ et possidendæ. Quam loquendi rationem Scripturibus Sacris frequentissimam esse, docet Glassius Philolog. Sacr. lib. iii. tr. 3, can. 10. Eadem notione idem verbum apud Josephum est, Ant. ix. 8, 3, de Jodao: τῷ Δαβίδου γένει τὴν βασιλείαν ἐκτήσατο, occasio

sive causa fuerat, regni Davidis stirpi restituenti.”—*Krebs.*

² “In this book the Jews are four times said to have crucified Jesus (Acts ii. 23, 36, and iv. 10, and v. 30), though they could not put any one to death (John xviii. 31); but they are said to have crucified Him, because they used the instrumentality of Pilate for that purpose. Thus Pilate is said to have scourged Jesus (John xix. 1), and Joseph to have hewn a tomb (Matt. xxvii. 60), and Christ to have baptized disciples (John iv. 1), though they only caused these things to be done. Thus also (vii. 9) the Patriarchs are said to have sold Joseph into Egypt, though they had no intention that he

has led to the conjecture that it might have been sold for these *thirty pieces of silver* because it had been polluted by the suicide of Judas.

Ps. lxi. 25;
cix. 8.

(20) *For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick¹ let another take.*

Corn. à Lap.

Ps. lxi. 25.

Ps. cix. 8.

St. Peter is here citing and adopting to the case of Judas portions of two Psalms. In the first we read, *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents; in the second, Let his days be few; and let another take his office.* The first is applied to the Jews, whose habitation was made *desolate* because of this very sin, in which Judas was their *guide*. The second, whether regarded as a direct prophecy or as quoted by St. Peter because of its striking applicability, is remarkable for its foreshadowing the circumstances of Judas's sin. In the second cited Psalm, to which St. Peter refers, we read:—

(1) *Let Satan stand at his right hand.* So we are told that he *entered into* Judas, and made him his own possession, when he had conceived the thought of betraying Christ, and was about to execute his intention.

(2) *Let his prayer become sin.* The occasion of sin, as when Judas brought back the thirty pieces of silver, and attested Christ's innocency, and yet the high priest persisted in his course, and refused to listen to the entreaties of the wretched Apostle.

(3) *Let his days be few* has a terrible application to the miserable suicide, who in his despair cut short *his days* by hanging himself.

Salmeron.

(4) *Let another take his office*, or, in the words of St. Peter, *his bishopric let another take*,² which prophecy was now to be fulfilled in the election and appointment of Matthias.

¹ "*Episcopatum* — Hebraicè *רִבְרָא* *p'qudah*, quæ vox significat administrationem, inspectionem, præfecturam et quasi visitandi et inspicendi officium. Septuaginta vero pro illa usurpaverunt *τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν*, quæ significat inspectionem, quoniam etiam inter profanos non tantum profanum habet usum, verum etiam sacrum, pro sacrarum virginum custode."—*Lorinus*.

² "*Episcopatum* ejus nominat Apo-

stolicam functionem, non imperium aut dominatum: nec abs re. Episcopatum enim speculationem vel superinspectionem interpretantur: id quod proprium Apostolorum officium est. Observa quòd fermè ubique Apostolicum munus iis nominibus denotatur, quæ important laborem, curam, sollicitudinem, vigilantiam, ne ambitioni locus relinquantur quæ tamen nunc plus satis invaluit."—*Ferus*.

(21) *Wherefore of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,* (22) *Beginning from the baptism of John,¹ unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.*

Mark i. 1.
John xv.
27.
Acts i. 8, 9;
iv. 33.

Let us note here the care taken by the Church that he who was to be chosen to be an apostle should have been an eye-witness not only of the mighty works of Christ, not only of His life, not only of His crucifixion and death, but should be able to testify to that most necessary truth, the resurrection of the Saviour, a truth which necessarily includes within it all other truths, such as the reality of His incarnation, and death on the cross. There are two qualities necessary to the teacher, and these are both insisted on here.

(1) Knowledge. He must have witnessed and experienced the truth of what He teaches.

(2) Faithfulness. As here the one to be chosen must be one who had been with Christ *all the time*, and had shown his steadfastness as the follower of Christ,—*all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.*²

Lange.

The Lord Jesus. The Lord, or Creator, and Ruler of all, Jesus, the Saviour, the Redeemer of the world. He it is who is the subject of this book of the Acts of the Apostles. He, and no other, chose Matthias for the office of an apostle. He it is who sent the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. He it is who added daily to the Church *such as should be saved*. He it is who worked the miracles which were done by the hands of the apostles. To Him, at the moment of death, Stephen prayed, and to Him he commended his soul. It was the voice of the Lord Jesus which called to Saul from heaven, and arrested him when about to commence the work of persecution at Damascus. He it was who sent Ananias to baptize Saul upon his conversion. By Him was Peter sent to Cornelius. His angel delivered Peter from prison, and destroyed the persecutor Herod. He summoned Paul to go over into Macedonia, and to preach the gospel there. When at Jerusalem, and in danger

Salmeron.

Acts i. 24.
Acts ii. 33.
Acts ii. 47.
Acts iii. 6;
iv. 10.
Acts vii. 59,
60.
Acts ix. 5.
Acts ix. 10,
15.
Acts x. 6, 14,
36.
Acts xii. 7,
23.
Acts xvi. 9,
10.

¹ "Incipiens à Baptismate Joannis; nam ut observat D. Chrysost. quæ antea facta fuerant, nemo noverat, nisi edoctus ab Spiritu Sancto, aut Sanctissima Virgine Maria manifestante, et inde multa quæ circumferebantur de Infantia Salvatoris, ut Apocrypha damnat Gelasius

Papa. Cap. Sanct. Romana Ecclesia distinct. 11."—*Sylveira*.

² "Omni tempore — non ex medio temporis spatio. *Intravit*, humanitatis est. *Inter nos*, nobis presentibus; vel inter homines."—*Gorranus*.

from the malice of the Jews, *the Lord stood by Paul*, and bade him *be of good cheer*, and strengthened him, and in the closing words of this book of the Acts of the Apostles it was of *the Lord Jesus Christ* that Paul preached when in bonds at Rome, so constant was His presence, so mighty His works in the days of the apostles, so ready were they at all times to acknowledge Him to be God, and to find their strength in His sustaining arm.

A witness with us of His resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is singled out as the main subject of the Apostle's teaching because, when this is established, every other doctrine respecting the person and work of Christ necessarily follows. To this, therefore, they were all to bear witness. Here, then, is a lesson and example for all bishops and pastors of Christ's flock. The apostles do not preach anything which they have neither seen nor heard from Christ, so now it must be His words, His deeds, His resurrection, His invitation, which the faithful ministers of the Church must declare to those committed to their charge.

Acts xv. 22. (23) *And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.*¹
 1 Sam. xvi. 7.
 1 Chro. xxviii. 9; xxix. 17.
 Jer. xl. 20; (24) *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen.*
 xvii. 10.
 Acts xv. 8.
 Rev. ii. 23.

That is, either the disciples, as afterwards in the selection of the seven deacons, *appointed* these two, one of whom was to be selected for this office,² or the appointment was made by the eleven apostles. It is not clear from the narrative which is to be understood. One thing is clear, the ministry was not sought by those who were so chosen, it was not the object of their ambition, but they were *appointed* thereto.³ *Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus*, apparently for his distinguished sanctity, and his uprightness before men. He is named first, and would seem to have been preferred by the brethren. Matthias again is placed last, and without any surname or title of

Yangas.

Menoehius.

Lorinus.

¹ By some *Joseph*, who was called *Barsabas*, has been thought to be the same as *Joses* the brother of *James* and *Jude*, and therefore the kinsman or brother of our Lord. Thus a preacher of past times says, "Videntur candidati ambo meritis ita pares fuisse ut nescirent apostoli inter eligendus; imò *Josephus* præferendus videbatur,

quia *Jacob* minoris frater, Christi consanguineus et prior nominatus est; at aliter judicat Deus." — *Hartung in Concio in festi S. Matthiæ.*

² See note B at the end of this chapter.

³ "*Statuerunt*—*Fortunata electio, ubi ambitio et affectus mentes non dividit non diducit vota.*" — *Novarinus.*

honour; he would thus seem to have been less esteemed by the brethren. God, however, who sees not as man sees, chose him who was last to be the first in His kingdom, and preferred Matthias to be of the number of the twelve apostles of His Church.¹ Matt. xx. 16.
Chrysostom.

Thou, Lord. This prayer is addressed to the Son of God, to Christ.² This is clear from what follows,—*whom Thou hast chosen* to bear testimony of Thee, and to be a pastor in Thy Church, to declare Thy gospel, and to witness to the fact of Thy resurrection. And in ascribing to Christ the knowledge of *the hearts of all men*, they declare that this Lord to whom they pray, and whose apostles they are, is very God.³ Olshausen.
Lorinus.

The prayer of the disciples when the number of the apostles was to be completed is the example and encouragement to us to pray that God would send forth good and learned teachers to labour in His vineyard. As they prayed, and as He answered their prayer, so does He answer the prayers of His people now, so will He choose those who will labour, and will strengthen them for His work. Quesnel.

(25) *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.* Acts i. 17.

His own place, the lot which he deliberately chose for himself. The words are used in a good and an evil sense repeatedly in Holy Scripture. Here they are used necessarily in an ill sense. *His own place*, that lot which he had chosen. When he betrayed his Lord and sought no forgiveness for this his great sin, Judas chose to himself perdition. Here, then, his own place or lot means suicide. So when we read of Balaam that *he rose up and went and returned to his place*, this is said not only of a local removal, but of a moral one. He shut his eyes to the truths revealed to him, he hardened his heart against his own desire to die *the death of the righteous*, and after labouring to tempt the Israelites Ecumenius.
Numb. xxiv.
25.
Numb. xxiii.
10.

¹ "O quantum distant humana supernis

Judiciis? Parvi meritò transcenditur ille

Laude hominum qui justus erat."—*Arator*.

² "Κρίσις when taken absolutely in the New Testament refers generally

to Christ."—*Hackett*.

³ "Καρδιονῶσα—Cui sunt omnium hominum animi noti, qui omnium indolem, sentiendi cogitandique rationem habet perspectam; qui Deus est solus. Homines autem sæpenumero externa specie falluntur."—*Rosenmüller*.

Numb. xxi.
16.Numb. xxi.
8.

to sin, and to induce them to *commit trespass against the Lord*, we read of the people whom he had successfully tempted to sin, that *Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword.*

Novarinus.

His own place was not, then, the apostolate, though Judas fell from that office and ministry. So in all ages many have filled offices in the Church of God which were not their *own place*, for which they had neither the qualification of holiness nor of learning.

(26) *And they gave forth their lots ;¹ and the lot fell upon Matthias ; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

Sylveira.

Gagneus.
Salmeron.Lorinus.
Estius.
Corn. & Lap.

The disciples chose *two* the most approved amongst themselves and the fittest in their estimation to be *witnesses* of the truth of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This choice was their part in the selection of one to fill the place of Judas. It was the work of the Holy Spirit to decide which one of these two should be *numbered with the eleven apostles.*

They gave forth their lots. Some have understood this to mean the suffrages deciding between the two, given in the usual manner of votes.² This, however, is hardly consistent with the narrative of St. Peter, and is opposed to the view of the great body of commentators, who understand the word *lot* in its usual meaning, and that the decision was the immediate work of God, and the result of the casting of this lot was that Matthias *was numbered with the eleven apostles*, accepted, that is,

¹ “*They cast forth the lots.*—The decision by lot took place according to an Old Testament custom. Tablets (not, as some suppose, dice), on which the names of Joseph and Matthias were written, being placed in a vessel, and that lot which on the shaking of the vessel first fell out (*ἐπεσεν*) gave the decision. This custom is most clearly illustrated in 1 Chron. xxiv. 5, and xxv. 8. In the Old Testament the lot was cast on the two goats at the yearly festival of the atonement, Lev. xvi. 8; and Moses commanded the land of Canaan to be divided by lot (Numb. xxxiv. 13), which took place under Joshua (Josh. xiv. 2; xviii. 2). In particular, the division of the land

among the tribes of Israel by lot occurred as an example to the apostles; the office of the apostleship was, as it were, the inheritance which one obtained—his lot which fell to him (*κληροί*, verses 17, 25).”—*Lange.*

² *κληροί*. “Venerabilis Bedæ ea est opinio Apostolos sortis ratione usos esse ut agnoscerent quem sibi Deus Apostolum vellet, quia Judæi, quotannis, magnum Sacerdotem in hunc modum eligere consueverant; at interpretum plerique putant ea verba, *sors cecidit*, nihil aliud innuere, quam Deum, ea occasione, voluntatem suam per apertum aliquod et sensibus obvium signum patefecisse.”—*Richard. Anal. Conciliorum Sæc. Prim.* tom. i. p. 34. (Venetiis, 1776.)

by common consent, and acknowledged as the twelfth apostle.¹

Leigh.
[End of the
Epistle for
St. Matthias's
day.]

¹ "Ex hac historia hæc piis observanda sunt, multum enim faciunt ad ecclesiæ reformationem. *Primò* diligens cura adhibeatur, ut fideles et pii pastores gregi dominicæ præsent. *Secundò* instantèr orandum, ut Dominus messis, operarios suos in messem mittat. *Tertiò* nullus in hoc negotio sibi ipsi canat, nec

proprium commodum sed animarum salutem querat. *Quartò* pastores assumantur doctrina et vita probati. *Ultimò* arceantur illi temerarii, qui ad omnia beneficia seipsos intrudunt, cum tamen ob insecitiam et impietatem nulli satisfaciant."—*Ferus*.

Note A, *verse* 18. "In Matt. xxvii. 5 it is said that Judas, after having brought his money and thrown it down in the temple, went and hanged or strangled himself. Objectors have represented that account as inconsistent with this, but without reason. Matthew does not say that Judas, after having hanged himself, *did not* fall to the ground and burst asunder; nor, on the contrary, does Luke say that Judas *did not* hang himself before he fell to the ground; and it is obvious that the matter should have been so stated, in order to warrant the charge of inconsistency. We have no certain knowledge as to the mode in which we are to combine the two accounts, so as to connect the act of suicide with what happened to the body. It has been thought not improbable that Judas may have hung himself from the trunk of a tree, on the edge of a precipice near the valley of Hinnom, and that, the rope breaking by which he was suspended, he fell to the earth, and was dashed to pieces. It will be observed that Luke's statement is entirely abrupt, and supposes some antecedent history. In this respect, Matthew's account, instead of then becoming any contradiction, becomes, in fact, confirmatory of the other. It shows, first, that Luke was aware that something preceded which he has omitted to mention. And, secondly, it puts us in the way of combining events, so as to account for the incomplete representation in the Acts, than would otherwise have been possible."—*Hackett*. See also *Dilucidationes Select. Sac. Script.*

quest. by *Martin Wouters*, vol. ii. Patavii, 1778. See note in *Wordsworth's Greek Testament* at this place. But though, according to common tradition, these words are taken to mean that Judas in despair, and moved by the greatness of his remorse, hung himself, yet, according to the strict meaning of the word used by St. Matthew, ἀπῆγγατο, we can only be sure that Judas was strangled. Hence it is sometimes said that he was suffocated by the intensity of his grief, and that falling down *he burst asunder in the midst*. Thus Sir Thomas Browne (*Inquiry into Vulgar and Common Errors*, chap. xi.) says, "This word ἀπῆγγατο, in Matthew, doth not only signify suspension or pendulous illaqueation, as the common picture describeth it, but also suffocation, strangulation, or interception of breath, which may arise from grief, despair, and deep dejection of spirit, in which sense it is used in the history of Tobit concerning Sara, ἐλυπήθη σφόδρα ὥστε ἀπᾶσθαι, *Ita tristata est ut strangulatione premeretur*, saith Junius; and so might it happen, from the horror of mind, unto Judas. So do many of the Hebrews affirm that Achitopel was also strangled—that is, not from the rope, but passion. For the Hebrew and Arabic word in the text, not only signifies suspension, but indignation, as Grotius hath also observed." See also the *Medica Sacra* of Dr. Mead.

Note B, *verse* 23. In the usual interpretation of these words, Καὶ ἐσθυσαν δὺο, the word "Assembly" is supplied

as the nominative to the verb, though some prefer *οἱ ἀποστόλοι*. On the one side Cornelius à Lapide says, "Apostoli cæterique fideles communi consensu nominarunt è toto numero duos." Tillemont (*Memoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclesiastique*, tome i. Saint Pierre, ch. v.) says, "Toute la compagnie presenta deux personnes Joseph Barsabas surnommé Juste et Matthias, comme les deux qui estoient les plus dignes de ce rang selon le jugement humain." The usual view of the Church is that given by Alban Butler in his *Lives of the Saints*, who says of this election, "two were unanimously pitched upon by the Assembly" (*Lives of the Saints* in Feb. 24th). On the other hand, Hammond paraphrases this verse thus: "And the eleven to whom this speech was addressed pitched upon and preferred two, leaving it to the lots to decide which of them it should be;" whilst Mosheim (*de rebus Christianorum ante Constant. Sæculum. prim. § xiv.*) argues thus: "Ego vocabulum ἀποστόλοι hic omissum esse, dubitare nequeo. Quis enim sibi facile persuadeat populum Christianum, Apostolis multis rebus inferiorem, potestatem sibi sumsisse, sui ordinis binos seligendi atque Apostolatus munere dignos prædicandi? Certum ergo habeamus, legatos Jesu Christi ex eorum numero, qui tum Christum Hierosolymis profitebantur, binos hosce viros excerpisse, atque præsentem cœtum jussisse, alterum eorum collegio Apostolorum addere."

There is a similar difference of opinion as to what is meant by the *lots* spoken of immediately afterwards. Some think that the suffrage of the assembled disciples is meant, and that they elected Matthias: others, that the two names being placed in a font or urn, one was taken out or was allowed to fall out, and that thus, without human intervention, Matthias was indicated.

The usual interpretation, genuine, as Cornelius à Lapide calls it, is the latter. He says, however: "Aliqui, ut Gagneius, censent fuisse scrutinium suffragiorum. Accedunt nostri Salmeronet Sanchez, qui censent Apostoloras ut Deus illuminaret mentes eorum, ac declararet cui eos vellet suum dare suffragium; et hoc vocare sortem, probant ex eo quod pro *anumeratus est*, græcè sit *συγκατεψηφίσθη*, id est, *Communibus calculis cooptatus est.*" This opinion is, however, rejected by Cornelius à Lapide, in which rejection he is in accord with the usual interpretation. Mosheim, on the other hand, says: "They—i.e. the Apostles—set apart two persons, Justus and Matthias, proposing one or other to the whole Assembly as a substitute for Judas, but leaving the choice of either to itself. The members of the Assembly, after prayer made and supplication to God offered for a right direction of their minds, gave their votes, and this office fell on Matthias; on which Professor Blunt (*History of the Christian Church during the first three centuries*), after citing these words, remarks: "Mosheim considers that *ἔβαλον κλήρους* and not *ἔδωκαν* would have been the phrase had it been meant to say that they cast lots. Certainly, *διδόναι κλήρους* is used in the Apost. Constit. viii. c. 5, in a prayer for the bishop that he may have authority to remit sins. *διδόναι κλήρους* is applied to clerical offices according to this institution. In this chapter of the Acts *κλήρος* has repeatedly the sense of clerical office. Thus verse 17, *Καὶ ἐλαχεν κλήρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης*; and, again, verse 25."

See in Godwyn's *Moses and Aaron*, Book I. chap. 5, for the use of lots in the appointment to duties in the temple service.

CHAPTER II.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PROCURATOR OF JUDEA,
HIGH PRIEST,

TIBERIUS.
PONTIUS PILATE.
CAIAPHAS.

(1) *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,*¹
they were all with one accord in one place.

Lev. xxiii. 15.
Deut. xvi. 9.
Acts i. 14;
xx. 16.

To the Apostles of Christ the promise had been made by their Lord that *the Holy Ghost should come upon them*, and that, after that, they should *be witnesses unto Him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*. According to His command, they had awaited in Jerusalem the fulfilment of this promise, and the gift of that Spirit which should enable them to perform the work of their Divine mission. We have here the account of the fulfilment of this *promise of the Father*. The Apostles and other of the disciples of Christ received the gift of the Holy Ghost for the work of their ministry on *the day of Pentecost*,² and went forth, no longer self-confident, but bold in the Lord; no longer fearing the opposition of men, but

(Epistle for
Whitsunday,
verses 1—11.

Acts i. 8.

Acts i. 4.

¹ "The words ἐν τῇ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν may be either rendered, as we have done in English, *when the day of Pentecost was fully come*; or as they are in the Italian, 'E nel finire del giorno della Pentecoste,' q. d. *when it was fully gone*."—*Lightfoot*.

"St. Luke is the only one of the writers of the New Testament who uses the word συμπληροῦν: cf. Luke x. 51."—*Wordsworth*.

² "Hodie Sponsus Ecclesiæ misit sponsæ suæ signum amoris; immo ipsum amorem, scilicet Spiritum Sanctum, qui amor est. Prius ostendit Deus mundo potentiam et sapientiam suam, sed hodie ostendit bonitatem suam, Spiritum Sanctum mittendo in mundum.

Et nota quòd adventus Spiritus Sancti in tribus differt ab adventu Filii Dei. Adventus Filii Dei duplex est. Unus ad homines et pro hominibus in mansuetudine, scilicet, et benignitate. Alius erit contra homines malos in majestate et severitate. Sed adventus Spiritus Sancti ad homines semper est pro hominibus. *Secundo* in hoc, quòd Filius Dei venit ad homines ut cum hominibus conversetur, sed Spiritus Sanctus venit ad homines ut in hominibus habitet. *Apud vos manebit et in vobis erit* [Joan. xiv. 17]. *Tertio* in hoc, quòd Filius ad Patrem rediit, sed Spiritus Sanctus cum Ecclesia remansit. Unde multum Ecclesia instare in festo isto ejus glorificationi debet."—*Peraldus*.

ready to suffer all things if so be they might thereby preach Christ. The doubt and hesitation which had marked the conduct of the Apostles when their Lord was with them were removed by the presence of that true Comforter whom He had promised them. He it was who strengthened and purified their hearts, and enlightened their understanding to understand the truths of which they were now to be made the preachers. The interval between the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was the time of their retirement from the world, like that interval which took place between the call and the baptism of the future Apostle of the Gentiles. Their Master seemed thus to command them to go *aside from the multitude* in order that they might be ready for that gift which He had promised them, and might be prepared to receive the grace which was now to be given to them. And yet the gift of the Holy Spirit, like all the gifts of God made in the fulfilment of His promise, is marked by this characteristic that the performance was greater than the promise. God had promised a gift: He gave to them Himself to be their Comforter. Christ promised the gift to His twelve Apostles: He gave it to the whole body of the disciples who were assembled with them to await the fulfilment of this His promise.

This gift was given to the disciples of Christ on the day of Pentecost,¹ a day which was observed by the Jews for these two reasons:—

(1) It was the *feast of harvest*, or *of weeks*, when the two loaves, made of new corn, were offered in the temple, in testimony of the completion of the harvest.²

¹ "This festival received its name from its occurring on the fiftieth day from the second day of the Passover; so that the interval embraced a circle of seven entire weeks, *i.e.*, a week of weeks. Its observance took place at the close of the gathering of the harvest, and was no doubt mainly commemorative of that event. See Jahn's *Archæol.* § 355. According to the later Jews, Pentecost was observed also as the day on which the law was given from Sinai; but no trace of this custom is found in the Old Testament, nor in the works of Philo or Josephus."—*Hackett.*

² "Duo panes novi, duos populos denotant Gentium et Judæorum Deo

per predicationem virtute Sancti Spiritus factam oblatos."—*Lorinus.*

"Offeramus hac die panes primitiarum duos, id est, pro duobus gratias agamus beneficiis, novis utique et omnibus maximis; videlicet quod pro omnibus nobis Unigenitum Filium Suum tradidit, et quod Filio Suo, in celis jam glorificato, Spiritum Sanctum Ipse Deus Pater, unâ cum Filio nobis destinavit."—*Royard.*

"Ex Levit. cap. xxiii. 17, et Deut. cap. xvi. 10, constat, singulæ familiæ eo die panes duos è novo tritico, quos tunc incipiebat meti, offerebant Domino frugum primitias. Quare videri posset institutum hoc festum in gratiarum actionem pro terræ frugibus; quod

Acts ix. 9.

Mark vii. 33.

Nicole.

Peraldus.

Exod. xxiii.

16.

Deut. xvi.

10.

Lorinus.

(2) It is said that on this day the law was at the first given from the top of Sinai, and hence it was called in later times *the feast of the law*. Theophylact.

A question has arisen as to the day of the week on which the Christian Pentecost took place. By some it has been held that it happened on the Jewish Sabbath, and that its observance was transferred to the Lord's Day, because of the magnitude of the blessing. Others hold that the descent of the Holy Spirit was on the same day of the week as the resurrection of Christ from the tomb, namely, on the Lord's Day. This is the more usual belief. And this is supported, to some extent, by the custom of the Karaites in celebrating their Pentecost, as Jews, only on the first day of the week, hence, though this sect may be comparatively of recent origin, they claim for their observances the sanction of remote antiquity.¹

The Evangelist here, and in the following verse, notes these particulars :—

(1) The time, and the fitness of the time, when the Holy Spirit was given : it was on the feast of *Pentecost*.

(2) The condition of the recipients : they were waiting at Jerusalem for the promised blessing, in obedience to the command of Christ.

(3) The manner of the coming of the Holy Spirit : it was *suddenly*.

(4) The outward tokens and manifestations of the presence of the Spirit, given to them in *tongues as of fire*.

(5) Its effects with reference to those who received the gift : they *were filled with the Holy Ghost*.

Fromond.

Wordsworth.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

eo etiam apparet verisimile, quia quinquagesimus hic dies à secundo mœorum die numeratur, in quo similiter offeruntur manipuli, id est, primitiæ frugis hordeaceæ. Quare duo hi dies consecrati videntur; alter pro prodece, alter pro tritico proventu." Gasp. Sanctius.

¹ "It was the universal belief of the ancient Christian Church that the Holy Ghost came down from heaven on the same day of the week as that on which our Lord arose from the dead, i.e. the first day of the week."—Wordsworth.

"This day of Pentecost began at three o'clock on the Saturday of the seventh week, and was fully come on the Sunday morning."—Bishop Cotton, *serm. on the Epistles*

"Prima Christianorum Pentecoste incidit in diem Dominicum: in Dominico enim descendit Spiritus Sanctus æquè ac Christus resurrexit. Numera enim à Dominica resurrectionis dies quinquaginta, et reperies quod Dominica septima sit dies quinquagesima, id est, Pentecoste. Unde sequitur, primam Pentecosten Christianorum, quam hic describit Lucas, fuisse diversam et distinctam à Pentecoste Judæorum. Illi enim eam celebrarant in Sabbato immediatè præcedente: Apostoli vero eam celebrarunt in Dominico subsequente; ut significaretur legem novam veteri succedere, veteremque in novam desinere, illique quasi peracto cursu suo, lampada tradere."—Cornelius à Lapide.

As to the fitness or correspondence of the antitype and type, it is to be observed—

(1) That this feast was instituted at the first in memory of the giving of the law, and that it was therefore called by the Jews *the feast of the law*.¹ It was fitting, then, that the new law should be written on the heart of believers first of that same day. And yet, as the second temple at Jerusalem excelled in glory the first temple, since in it entered not only the high priest of the Aaronic dispensation, but the High Priest *after the order of Melchisedec*, the Son of God, so did the Christian Pentecost excel the Jewish, since the Christian dispensation was founded not on fear, and concerned not temporal promises, but was founded on love, and promised a spiritual inheritance. The first was given from Mount Sinai, the last from Mount Zion, from Jerusalem, the city of peace.

(2) The Jewish Pentecost was observed year by year as a feast of thanksgiving for the completion of the harvest; in the Christian Pentecost, we commemorate the blessing sent us in fulfilment of His promise who is the true Bread from heaven. At the Passover the first sheaf of corn that had been cut was presented in the temple, and there offered up to the Father: Christ, the firstfruits of the new creation, at the Pentecost, in token that the harvest had indeed come, and that the offering up of Himself was accepted, and that a new law was now ready for the granary, sent the promised Comforter. Two loaves were prescribed under the law: but at this first Pentecost, in token that the fruits of the fields which our Blessed Lord had declared to be *white already to harvest* were now being gathered in, and that the redemption of mankind was accomplished, *three thousand souls* were gathered into the Church on the same day that the Spirit was poured out upon the disciples assembled in obedience to the command of their Lord.

They were all with one accord in one place: prepared to receive the Spirit of Unity by their own union of heart and by their assemblage *in one place*, waiting *with one accord* to receive Him who is Uncreated Love, and the Lover of concord. The promise of God is to those who *are gathered together*, not to those who separate themselves from the great body of the faithful.²

¹ "Ce jour s'appelait, parmi les Hébreux, *la feste de la Loi*, parce que la Loi aiant esté donnée cinquante jours après la sortie d'Égypte, Dieu institue la feste de la Pentecoste pour

faire souvenir le peuple du don de la Loi."—*Amelote*.

² "Fuerunt omnes eadem animatione simul in unum."—*Augustine cont. epist. Fundam.*

There is yet a further significance in the fact that this miraculous gift of the Spirit was bestowed on the feast of the *Pentecost*. This was one of the three times in each year when every male was bound to come up to the Temple at Jerusalem.¹ This miracle, by which God publicly recognized the disciples as His ministers, and gave them power to go forth and to teach all nations, was when a great multitude had assembled, not only from Judæa, but *out of every nation under heaven*.² This, like other mercies of God in the redemption of mankind and in the establishment of His Church, *the pillar and ground of the truth*, was done in the sight of the multitude, who could test the claim of the Apostles, and who were witnesses of the facts which they declared. Neither the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, nor the gift of the Holy Spirit to apply that sacrifice to the souls and consciences of men, were things *done in a corner*. They were seen and known by multitudes. For this reason it may be, as we are told, Christ went up to Jerusalem so constantly at the times of the feasts; at any rate, this was one consequence of these goings up of the Saviour. He afforded to the whole nation opportunities by which the reality of His

Deut. xvi.
16.

Verse 5.

1 Tim. iii. 15.

Acts xxvi.
26.John ii. 23;
v. 1; vii.
10; x. 22,
23; xii. 12.

"Unity is a preparation for sanctity, and holy gifts seldom are bestowed on those who love divisions."—*Sparke's Antillula Altaris*.

¹ "This feast was called *πεντεκοστή*, the Pentecost, which word signified the fiftieth day, because it was observed upon the fiftieth day after the second of the Passover, which was the sixteenth of Nisan. . . Now those fifty days were in truth the appointed time of their harvest—their harvest being prolonged, as it were, with two remarkable days, the one being the beginning, the other the end thereof: the beginning was *δευτέρα τοῦ πάσχα*, the second of the Passover; the end was *πεντεκοστή*, the fiftieth day after. Upon the *δευτέρα* there being offered a sheaf of the firstfruits of their harvest (Lev. xxiii. 10); upon the Pentecost they offered two wave-loaves (Lev. xiii. 17): the sheaf being an oblation offered in the name of the whole congregation, whereby all the after-fruits throughout the land were sanctified, being from thence, and not before, lawful to reap the corn; the two loaves signifying not only an eucharistical offering,

but also a token of the harvest finished and ended."—*Godwyn's Moses and Aaron*, lib. iii. cap. 5. It differed from the other two national festivals, 'the feast of the Passover' and 'the feast of Tabernacles,' in being restricted to a single day.

² The extent to which the towns of Palestine were emptied of their inhabitants, and Jerusalem was crowded with worshippers, at these feasts, may be gathered from facts such as these—In A.D. 66 Cestius Gallus, when on his way from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, burnt the large and flourishing town of Lydda, there being, as Josephus records, but fifty persons in the place, the rest of the inhabitants having gone up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of Tabernacles (Bell. Jud. iv. 19, § 1); and the same historian relates that, when the same officer came to Jerusalem at the feast of unleavened bread, no less a number than three millions of people came about him, entreating him to have compassion on their needs and on the miserable state of their nation.—Bell. Jud. ii. 4, § 2, quoted in *Biscoe on the Acts of the Apostles*, chap. 3.

miracles could be evidenced, and by which they might satisfy themselves of the truth of His claim to be the Messiah. So did Paul afterwards go up to Jerusalem at the feast, and then preached to the multitude; going up, not only that he might perform his devotions in the Temple, but that he might make known to the Jews assembled from every nation that message of salvation which he had been commissioned to declare.

Acts iv. 31.

(2) *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

Amelote.

Whilst the assembled disciples were sitting—that is abiding or dwelling together; for this rather than the posture of the body is meant¹—there came a sound from heaven. They were abiding together in expectation that the promises made by Christ at His ascension would be soon fulfilled, and were therefore in a fitting temper to receive this great gift of the Holy Spirit. And then, suddenly—not gradually, as in the case of human instrumentality but with the celerity with which God can work His will—there came a sound, arresting the attention of the Apostles and thus preparing them to receive the gift² which had been promised. And this sound came from heaven, the throne of God's glory, thus showing the Apostles from whence all spiritual gifts must come, and from whence they must seek grace and power for their mission: from heaven, whither they had seen Christ ascend, and where He was now seated at the right hand of Majesty, to perform that which He had promised to them—the sending of another Comforter to abide with them, and to lead them into all truth.

Corn. & Lap.

Ecumenius.

John xvi. 7—14.

Novarinus.

Matt. iii. 12.

Mal. iii. 3.

And the sound from heaven was as of a rushing mighty wind, in symbol of the power of the Holy Spirit, and of the effect of His presence in cleansing the human heart of the chaff and the corruption of earth which had gathered there preparatory to that coming with unquenchable fire which should destroy all works of sin, when He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And the sound filled all the house when

¹ "Ubi erant," *Syr. vers.*; "commorantes," *Menochius*. "Verbo sedendi habitationem intellige." — *Salmeron*. See on Mark xvi. 19, Commentary on Sunday and Saint Day Gospels, that for Ascension-Day.

² "Signum sui adventus Spiritus

Sanctus exhibuit, sed per sonum, quod aurium objectum est: cur non per objectum oculorum? An, quia auris sensus fidei est et obedientiæ? Debet autem Dei gratiam recepturus per fidem et obedientiam præparari." — *Novarinus*.

they were sitting; so that the house was an image of the world, which should be filled with the sound of the Gospel by their teaching, and should go forth from this *house* at Jerusalem unto the uttermost parts of the earth, and thus perpetually witness to the world of the power, the light, and the fire of that Holy Spirit which was at this time given to the disciples.

The coming of the Holy Spirit *suddenly* points to the fact, that though not without preparation,—for all our Lord's teaching was to them a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit,—yet it was without merit on the part of those who received this gift. For, however sudden the change of heart may be, as when Saul the persecutor was changed into Paul a chosen vessel of God, yet the preparation of the heart, the discipline of repentance, is not sudden; and the strength which is given with that change of heart is for the performance of the slow and gradual work of sanctification in which the convert is a fellow-worker with God.¹

As the promise of Christ that He would send the Comforter was thus *suddenly* fulfilled, so will it be as to His own coming at the day of judgment.

At the first Pentecost, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, we are told that the people *stood at the nether part of the mount*, and that *all the people that was in the camp trembled* at the sight and at the thunderings from the mount; but on the second Pentecost, the giving of the law of liberty at Jerusalem, the disciples of Christ awaited in calm expectancy the coming of the promise from on high: so greatly differed the covenant of bondage from that of liberty and of love.

Manifold are the forms by which the Spirit has made known His presence and His coming to mankind. As a *dove* He came at the baptism of Christ—a symbol of the purity of heart which is the effect of His indwelling. As a resplendent *cloud* His presence was made evident at the transfiguration of Christ—an image of that light which shall be ever around the path of those who retain Him in their hearts, and of that protection with which He shall shield them in the midst of the world's temptations. As a *breath* did Christ give the Holy Spirit to His Apostles after His resurrection—a figure of that spiritual life, the breath of God, which is manifest wherever He abides. On the day of Pentecost, however, He came with a *sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind*,

¹ * Ἀφνω.—“Antequam virtus procedat in opus, præcedit deliberatio; et secundum hoc dicitur ‘virtus lenta:’ sed cum incipit operari, repente opera-

tur; et sic quantum ad infusionem dicitur sonus repente fieri, non quantum ad deliberationem.”—Hugo de S. Charo.

Corn. à Lap.

Ferus.

Rémig. Fior.

Lorinus.

Sylveira.

Bengel.

Exod. xix.
16, 17.

Royard.

Matt. iii. 16.

Luke ix. 34,
35.

John xx. 22.

showing the power with which He will cleanse the heart from the impurities of earth; and as *fire*, to evidence His purifying, His enlightening energy, His work in kindling the affections and inflaming the desires of the child of God for the things of heaven.¹ For wherever His blessed presence is manifested, there will all doubts be dispelled, since He is Light; all coldness be removed, since He is Fire; all indifference be banished, since He is Eternal Love.²

Corn. & Lap.

The sound which *filled all the house* where the Apostles and the other disciples of Christ were sitting was *from heaven*. He who would do God's will must let his voice speak of heavenly things. The minister of God who seeks to please men, will do so only when he forgets his mission, and will then speak of the things of earth in the voice of earth. He, however, who would win souls to Christ, and undo the burden of sin from the necks of sinners, must move them with a *sound from heaven*, a voice speaking to them of heavenly truths in the accents of heaven.³

Nicole.

Matt. iii. 11.

(3) *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

Fromond.

There appeared to the eye—they were visible. *Unto them*—to all, that is, who were present. If others were present, as the gift was not to them, so it may be the sight would not have been; but the sight was given to all those who were to receive the gift. *Cloven tongues*—parting themselves off like streams from one source, like branches from one root—*like as of fire* in outward appearance, though not fire. *And it sat*—not the tongues only, but *it*, the Spirit also which was given at the time of this outward manifestation. For though the tongues of fire sat on each, there

Salmeron.

Chrysostom.

¹ *Wind*. "Hæ figuræ, nos docent modum operandi, quo Spiritus Sanctus in nobis utitur. Operatur per modum ignis et venti. Per modum ignis, quia emollit, illuminat, accendit, purgat cor. Per modum venti, quia refrigerat, ac reficit tempore angustiarum per solatium et initia vitæ æternæ quæ proinde vocatur tempus refrigerationis. Movet etiam per efficacem suam operationem sicut ventus impellit naves."—*Struso*.

² "The Spirit is ethereal fire stirring the hearts of men by a twofold power, that of light and heat—the

light of the faith, and the warmth of love."—*Philaret*.

³ "Questa casa significava tutto il mondo, e però si come tutta quella casa fù ripiena di suono e di lume così tutto il mondo, doveva riempirsi del suono delle voci Apostoliche, e del lume della verità Evangelica."—*Remigio Fioren. Annotationi morali nell'Epistola ed Evang.* "The community of Pentecost speaking in other tongues is the whole human race brought back again to God so that now all peoples, Jews and Gentiles, praise and glorify God in their own tongues."—*Baumgarten*.

was no virtue in the symbol; the real gift was that *one and the selfsame Spirit* which now filled the heart and purified the affections and strengthened the will of each of the disciples of Christ.¹ In token of the permanence of that gift—an evidence of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart which receives and drives Him not away by persistence in sin—we are told that *it sat upon each of them*. 1 Cor. xii. 11.

This image is a very expressive one. It was a twofold one—*tongues and fire; tongues like as of fire*. *Tongues* :— Sanctius.

(1) Because they were now to go forth and preach the Gospel, and declare by *the tongue* the message of God to every creature. Theophylact.

(2) Because those who had formerly been unlearned and ignorant men, unapt to teach and powerless to convince, were from henceforth to speak with power, and by speaking were to convince the unbeliever. Novarinus.
Spangenberg.

(3) With *tongues*, enabling them to speak divers languages, and teaching them also that the Church of God was no longer to be limited to Judæa, but was from henceforth to embrace all the tribes of earth, all the *tongues* under heaven.² Sylveira.

Like as of fire :³—

(1) Because fire is an image of God Himself; *The Lord thy God is a consuming fire*. *The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them*. Like fire does His Spirit purify the heart of the believer, by burning up the sins which defile it. Like fire does it lighten up the way of the ignorant, and warm the soul which has hitherto been cold and indifferent to spiritual truth. This fire, then, was a striking emblem of the purity which should characterize the child of God, and be to others a proof of his sonship, the testimony of God's indwelling.⁴ Deut. iv. 24. 1

(2) *Fire* was an emblem of the power with which their mission was to be accompanied. They were to go forth, Deut. xxxiii. 2.

¹ "The tongues rested on the head of each. Hence the singular number *ἐκάθεα* (cf. *Valck and Winer*, § 58, p. 58), showing that these gifts were from one Spirit, and that they were not to be a mere transitory boon, but an abiding presence. Christ ascended up on high and gave *gifts* to men, that the Lord God might *dwell* among them (Ps. lxxviii. 18)." — *Wordsworth*.
Sunt tamen e vetustis interpretibus eque Patribus apud quos verbum

plurale *ἐκάθισαν* sederunt legitur, sicut est in græca pagina codicis cantabrigiensis." — *Patritius*.

² "It was necessary that even the Apostles should be led to entertain more enlarged views respecting the comprehensive design of the new dispensation." — *Hackett*.

³ "ὥστε quasi; non ex igne sed ignis speciem referentes." — *Patritius*.

⁴ "*Sedit super singulos* — quia requies ejus indicatur in sanctis." — *Bede*.

Novarinus.

Topiarus.

Luke xxiv.
32.

1 Pet. iv. 12.

Cyril, Hier.

Th. à Villa-
nova, Hom.
in Pent.

John xvi. 13.

not to soothe the conscience of the sinner, not to flatter the ungodly, whether of great or of little worldly estimation, but they were to convince the gainsayer, to terrify the hardened sinner, to overthrow the strongholds of Satan, and to inflame the hearts of men with the fire of Divine love.¹ This will be the effect of all such preaching as is accompanied by the Spirit. Thus was it with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, who when they heard the word preached by the Eternal Word, exclaimed, *Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?*

(3) *Fire* was an emblem of the tribulation and afflictions which awaited the Apostles. They were called to a *fiery trial*. They were to suffer, and by sufferings to be perfected, and by these same sufferings to be witnesses to others of the power of the Spirit which had been given to them. So that the *fire* was at once an emblem of the afflictions which awaited them, and of Him who was greater than all enemies, and who could protect them in all dangers.

The fire of God's Spirit it is which strengthens the soul to endure all tribulations, and which enabled the Apostles of Christ to go forth into the midst of an evil world raging with fury against the Crucified, and to bear all sufferings, and finally death itself, for the sake of their Master. It was this fire which purified their hearts, and which cleansed them from that earthly ambition which, up to the time of their Master's ascension, led to strife amongst them.² It is this fire which kindled then, and which still kindles, the heart of the Christian with love from heaven, and for the things of heaven. It is this fire which lightens still the path of the believer, and which gave the Apostles light to see and to know those truths which they were commissioned to make known unto men, for it is one attribute of the Spirit to *guide men into all truth*.³

¹ "*Tanquam ignis, — quia Deus noster ignis consumens est* [Deut. iv. 24]. Et quia admodum ignis Spiritus purgat corda, urit peccata, illuminat ignorantias, calefacit et torporem ignavie exurit, incinerat per humilitatem, indurat per fortitudinem, se communicat per misericordiam, sursum tendit per desiderium æternum."—*Hugo de S. Charo.*

² "Venit in igne et in linguis, ut legem lingue igneæ loquerentur. Spiritus Sanctus ignis est, amor enim ignis est. Sicut autem ignis non potest non ardere, sic Spiritus Sanctus

non potest non ardere et calefacere nec est qui se abscondat a calore ejus Ecce quomodo ignis Spiritus Sancti roboraverat Petrum. Ignis iste accendit, confirmat, et erudit. . . Ignis iste devorat et consumit ligna fœnum, stipulam, id est, peccata in nobis."—*Pet. Blessensis.*

³ "Venit Spiritus Sanctus super discipulos in linguis igneis, ut linguæ omnium gentium verba ignea loquerentur, et legem igneam lingue igneæ prædicarent."—*S. Bernard. in festo Pent., Sermon. i. § 2.*

These *tongues like as of fire* were distributed to *each of them*, that all might know he had his distinct gift, and that none might exalt himself above his brother. They *sat*, thus teaching them that they were to do their work constantly, and were not to tire in their mission of preaching the Gospel of Christ to the world.

Wordsworth.

Those whom the Spirit fills with His presence He inflames with love to God and with zeal to proclaim His message—the *wonderful works of God*, His mercy to sinners. So should every minister of God have a tongue which shall rouse the careless from their sin, and the fire of the Spirit to inflame the heart of the penitent with zeal for God, and stir up the soul to aspire like fire towards heaven.¹ Hence, a symbol of the work which is intrusted to him, the bishop, at his consecration, formerly had the Gospel, which is the tongue of fire of the Spirit, by whom it is inspired, laid upon his head.

Mariana.

Royard.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Theophylact.

(4) *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*²

Mark xvi.
17.

Acts i. 5 ;

xix. 6.

1 Cor. xii.

10, 28, 30 ;

xiii. 1 ;

xiv. 2.

They were all filled—not the Apostles only, but the whole body of the faithful, the one hundred and twenty disciples assembled *with one accord in one place*. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled : *I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy*. Those who had before received in measure were now *filled with the Holy Ghost*. Thus are the gifts of God always larger and more abundant than His promises. Christ had promised the gifts of the Spirit to the twelve : He fulfils His word, but at the same time He gives it to the whole body of the faithful—they *were all filled*. Here, again, we have another mark of the superiority of the new law over the old. From Mount Sinai the law was given to Moses for the people of Israel ; here it is given for all people throughout the whole

Chrysostom.

Joel ii. 28.

Leo, Sermon.
iii, de Pent.

Novarinus.

¹ "Ces cœurs brûlans n'avaient que des paroles enflammées, propres à entretenir le feu dans les autres cœurs que Dieu préparait intérieurement pour le concevoir. Car il faut ordinairement deux choses pour faire du feu. Il faut une matière propre à le concevoir, et il faut un feu qui l'allume.

Il est Dieu qui prépare les cœurs : mais il se sert ordinairement de la parole enflammée des prédicateurs pour mettre le feu, en joignant à ce feu

extérieur le feu intérieur du Saint-Esprit. C'est là la voie ordinaire de la conversion des âmes ; et c'est ce qui découvre encore pourquoi on voit aujourd'hui si peu de conversions. C'est qu'il y a bien peu de langues de feu propres à enflammer les cœurs."—Nicole.

² "As the Spirit gave them utterance—ἀποφθέγγεσθαι. For the things spoken by them were ἀποφθέγματα, profound utterances."—Chrysostom.

world, not to one man, but to *all* the disciples sent forth to teach and to disciple all nations. The old law, again, was written on tables of stone; the new law of the Gospel was engraven on the hearts of the believers by the fingers of the Holy Spirit: *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost for this end.*

Sylveira.

They were filled with the Holy Ghost. There was no part of the complex nature of man which was not pervaded by the Spirit. The intellect was illuminated to know the truths of the Spirit; the affections were purified and inflamed with desire after heavenly things; the will was strengthened to obey the motions of the Spirit.¹ And this fullness of the Spirit within was manifested without by their being miraculously enabled to speak with diverse tongues. Those who are so filled give out only the language of the life-giving Spirit. Even when they speak of earthly things it is with a tongue reminding men of the wisdom and simplicity of the children of the kingdom of God. When they do aught in the common business of life, their example recalls the thought of a higher life. All they say or do is thus edifying. Let us, then, pray the Spirit of sanctity and of truth that He would so pervade our mind and heart, and soul that all we say, and do, and think may be to His glory, and to the edification of our fellow men.²

Cajetan.

Corn. à Lap.

The heart of man cannot be empty. The Spirit will not dwell in the heart which is full of self. The more, however, the heart is empty of self, the more ready will it be for the indwelling of the Spirit; and where He is, the capacity of the heart to receive is made greater, and what He thus enlarges He will fill.

Quenoci.

Corn. à Lap.

And these, whom the Holy Spirit filled with His presence *began at once to speak.* They began to speak that Gospel which shall be for ever preached until the end of all things.

¹ " Spiritus bonus monet, et movet, et docet: monet memoriam, rationem docet, movet voluntatem. In his enim tribus tota consistit anima nostra. Memoriam suggerit bona in cogitationibus sanctis, atque ita ignaviam nostram torporemque repellit. Propterea quoties hujusmodi suggestionem boni senseris in corde tuo, da honorem Deo, et age reverentiam Spiritui Sancto, cujus vox sonat in auribus tuis. Ipse namque est qui loquitur justitiam."—*S. Bernard. in festo Pent.*, Serm. i. § 6.

² " Præclarè Richard. de S. Victore,

Serm. de Missione Spiritus Sancti, tre in eo gradus ponit et distinguit, nimirum Sancti Spiritus infusionem, diffusionem, effusionem. *Infusio* est cum suam gratiam animæ infundit, etiam eam non impleat; sicuti cum vinum vasi infunditur usque ad vasis dimidium. *Diffusio*, quando per totam animam diffunditur, ita ut nullam ejus partem vacuum relinquat. *Effusio*, quando ita eam replet, ut supereffluat, eamque in alios effundat. Et sic Apostoli hic aliqui fideles in Actis, dicuntur repleti Spiritu Sancto."—*Corn. à Lapide.*

on earth. The Apostles *began* that which their successors in the ministry are to continue to preach throughout the whole world; they spake *with other tongues*, according to the promise which Christ made to them before his ascension: *These signs shall follow them that believe; In My name . . . they shall speak with new tongues.* And they spake *as the Spirit gave them utterance*: wisely, as the Spirit of wisdom moved them; powerfully, as the Spirit of power strengthened them; purely, as the Spirit of purity enabled them to speak.¹

Sylveira.

Gagneius.

Mark xvi. 17.

Corn. & Lap.

As by the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel mankind was divided, so by the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost the New Jerusalem began to be built up, and mankind was invited to return to the *one fold* and to the *one Shepherd*.

Bede.

Salmeron.

John x. 16.

(5) *And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*

There were dwelling, in order to be present at the Pentecost in Jerusalem, according to the command, *Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.*² They were *devout men*, because they came to worship in obedience to the commands of God; and they were from all the surrounding peoples, *from every nation* into which the Jews had been carried by various conquerors, especially by Antiochus Epiphanes.³

Exod. xxiii.

17.

Corn. & Lap.

But they were not only such as had come up for this purpose, they were many of them dwellers at Jerusalem, who had probably come from distant countries in order to spend the evening of their life and to die in the Holy City. We

Bengel.

Lange.

¹ "Sedissee dicitur divinus Spiritus super singulos, sicut super currum auriga, et super navem gubernator. Ille ergo et suggerebat quid dicerent, et linguam ita moderabatur, ut et vera loquerentur et gravia et ad sensus viresque hominum attemperatè. Severe autem, inquit Beda, regiè potestatis est. Felix qui à Spiritu Sancto regi sinit; neque à sua voluntate nunquam habet, nisi quod se totum divinæ voluntati atque consilio gubernandum dedit."—*Gasp. Sanctius*.

² "Those that are hereby meant are Jews who, as *ἄνδρες ἐν λαβείῃς*, homines pii, religiosi, had settled in the Holy City, and in the vicinity of the city, in order not to miss any feast. They

must consequently be carefully distinguished both from original inhabitants and natives of the city, and also from the mere pilgrims to the feast."—*Rossteuscher in Baumgarten*.

³ "There were three classes of dispersed Hebrews:—1, those who were led into captivity by Shalmanezzer, most of whom were in Parthia, Media, and Elamitis; 2, by Nebuchadnezzar, who were chiefly in Mesopotamia; 3, and by Ptolemy Lagus, who carried away the inhabitants of Jerusalem into Egypt. In addition to these, vast numbers of Jews had settled in various countries, especially in the great marts of commerce."—*Cook on the Acts of the Apostles*.

Lyall's Pro-
phet.
Dissert. 1.

may note in this way one means by which the world was prepared for the teaching of our Blessed Lord. These Jews were scattered among all peoples; they had their friends and connections in every direction and in all nations. They were thus made, even unconsciously on their part, the missionaries of the infant Church and the heralds of Christ proclaiming Him, even if they did it of enmity, of strife, and contention.

(6) *Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*

Corn. & Lap.

Chrysostom.
Vatablus.

They were confounded when they heard of this gift of tongues, were disturbed and perplexed at the report, and marvelled at the wonders which God had wrought; some conscience-stricken at this confirmation of the words of Christ, and at the evidence of His power who had been crucified and had risen from the grave; some, doubtless, with fear, as the word *συνεχύθη* implies.

We hear that these men were astonished, that they were confounded at what was told them, and at hearing the Apostles speaking in the language of those whom they addressed; we are not told that they became Christians, that they were converted from their character of persecutors, though some doubtless were, since so many—*three thousand souls*—were that day added to the Church. Many on the day of Pentecost, as in the time of our Blessed Lord's teaching, witnessed the miracle and were confounded, but did not give up their old unbelief and become humble believers: then, as now, many were those who were called, few the number of those who were saved.¹

Nicole.

Acts i. 11.

(7) *And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans?*

They were all amazed and marvelled—

(1) That the Apostles, who had never learnt, spake all the languages of those who were then dwelling at Jerusalem.

¹ "De tout ce grand nombre de personnes qui furent spectateurs de cette merveille, ou qui eu entendirent parler, et qui furent ensuite s'en éclaircir parfaitement, il y en eut peu qui se convertirent, en comparaison de ceux qui demeurèrent incrédules . . .

C'est qu'il y en avait peu qui cherchassent sincèrement la vérité. Or quand le cœur n'est point animé d'un véritable désir de connaître la vérité, les plus grandes et les plus évidentes merveilles demeurent inutiles et sans effet."—Nicole.

(2) That these men who spake with divers tongues were wholly unlearned—that they were unlearned and ignorant Acts iv. 13.
men.

(3) That they spake of nothing save of the wonderful works of God, and of His mercy to mankind in the death, Ferus.
the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ Jesus.

Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans?—those who as a people were reported to be dull and ignorant: and yet Lorinus.
these were the men who were speaking to the Jews and to the strangers at Jerusalem, each in his own peculiar dialect; for it is the dialect (*διάλεκτος*), and not merely the Menochius.
tongue, which is spoken of.¹

(8) *And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

It is the general opinion of commentators on Holy Scripture and of the early writers on Church history, that this gift of tongues was a power given to each of the disciples of speaking one specific language, not a power of speaking all languages: so that the Holy Spirit by this very gift assigned to the disciples that field where each should labour, when upon the dispersion of the members of the Church at Severus.
Jerusalem they were scattered abroad. Acts viii. 1, 4.

How hear we every man in our own tongue? The Gospel tidings were given for every man, as Christ died for all, and Stier.
rose again for the justification of all.

(9) *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the Acts i. 22.*
dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cap-
padocia, in Pontus, and Asia, (10) Phrygia, and
Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya
about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and
proselytes, (11) Cretes and Arabians, we do hear
them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of
*God.*²

Commentators have noted a certain order in the placing

¹ "Paucis monendus est lector. Galilæos tunc propter rusticatem et simplicitatem famosos fuisse. Adeoque magis mirum id Judæis videbatur, quod tam rudes homines tanta virtute pollebant."—*Schoettgen*. "The Christian Church speaks in all dialects of all languages. It shoots out its roots and

fibres everywhere, and consecrates all nations and races of the world."—*Wordsworth*.

² "Τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ.—Magnalia vocat occulta et secreta Dei, quæ articulis fidei continentur: quibus detectis, magnifica Dei potentia, bonitas, et sapientia illustrantur."—*Salmeron*.

Bengel.

Olshausen.

Alford.

Olshausen.

of these names. One has supposed that the order is that of the great families of the world; first the children of Shem, then those of Japheth, and lastly the children of Ham. This seems, however, hardly borne out by the text. Others have pointed out that the order is geographical, and that first the Eastern people are placed, then those of the North, next those of the South, and lastly those of the West. A difficulty has, however, been suggested by the introduction of *Judæa* amongst foreign provinces, and Tertullian, and Augustine in one place, read in lieu of it Armenia. The only reason for the substitution of Armenia for Judæa appears to be the obvious one, that people of Judæa would not require to be addressed in a language new to the Apostles: the province of Judæa, however, contained many who were not Jews either by birth or language, and the use of this name in a book written for Gentiles, and probably chiefly for the members of the Church in Italy, is natural.¹

By the word *Parthians* the Evangelist points out that some of those who heard the Apostles and other disciples speaking in their own language were from Babylon. To the west of this region dwelt the *Medes*, and near to them, on the east of the Tigris, the *Elamites*, people of the province of Elam, the capital of which was Susa. This word, however, is sometimes used for Persia, as it probably is here.² Next St. Luke enumerates those from *Mesopotamia*, the well-known district lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates, from which position it derived its name: this was the Padan-aram of the book of Genesis. *Cappadocia* and *Pontus* were provinces lying on the south coast of the Euxine or Black Sea. By *Asia* St. Luke here, as elsewhere in this book, means that district of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. In *Phrygia*, at that time a part of the Roman province of Asia, many Jews had been settled from the time of the Maccabees, and these no doubt spake and understood only the language of that country. *Pamphylia* is sometimes reckoned a portion of Galatia. And now, having spoken of the strangers who were then at Jerusalem from the adjacent provinces of Asia, St. Luke passes on to *Egypt*, in the northern part of which province,

¹ "*Judæa*—nota est regio. Vult evangelista, ex omnibus Judææ partibus advenas tunc Solymis fuisse."—*Wicelius*. "*Judæam*. Proprie dictam quæ solum sortem Judæe et Benjamin comprehendit. Hi enim Judæi strictè dicti, saltem dialecto linguæ Syriacæ,

differebant à Galileis et Samaritanis, qui tamen etiam erant Judæi generaliter dicti."—*Fromond*.

² "*Ælamitæ*, ἐλαμίται, id est Persæ, Persie enim Hebraicè עִלְמִי. Elam nomen habuit at Elamo Semi filio. Gen x. 22."—*Patritius*.

and especially in Alexandria, a large number of Jews had been long settled. In *Cyrene*, again, it was estimated at that time that a fourth of the population were of Jewish origin. In *Crete*, moreover, and in *Arabia*, Jewish settlers had long established themselves in large numbers.¹ *Strangers of Rome*, Jews by birth as well as by religion, and *proselytes*, who were Jews only by religion, and who with the others had come to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of Pentecost;—these, though Jews, would seem not to have been citizens of Jerusalem as those *derout men* were of whom mention has been already made, but residents at Rome who had come to Judæa to be present at this feast.

All these were astonished at hearing these men of Galilee, the Apostles of Christ, speaking² in their own *tongues the wonderful works of God*—all those marvels which God had in His love wrought for mankind by the deeds of Christ Jesus: His power as evidenced in the miracles and teaching of the Saviour; in the wonders which were manifested at the death and in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and in His ascension into heaven; and declared to these multitudes of strangers by the Apostles of our Lord, speaking in the fulness of the Spirit.

These Apostles were thus beginning to make known to men the marvels of redemption. If—as we are called upon to do—we would continue the work which was begun at this feast of Pentecost, let us turn to that Holy Spirit who then filled the Apostles of Christ, and who is the Light of true wisdom and the Pledge of salvation to every believer, the true and only Comforter sent from God. Let us seek from Him that sanctification of the heart and affections which He has promised, that, like the first disciples of Christ, we may proclaim *the wonderful works of God* to those who are yet strangers to His love and indifferent to His mercy.³

Josephus,
Antiq.
xiv. 7, 2.
Wordsworth.
Alford.
Cook.

Mariana.

Cajetan.

Fromond.

Huré.

Salmeron.
[End of Epis-
tle for
Whitsun-
day.]

¹ See the treatise of Philo Judæus *legat. ad Caium*, § 36, for a similar enumeration of Jewish colonies.

² “La plénitude du Saint-Esprit dans les Apostres et dans leurs successeurs n'est pas une plénitude muette et oisive. Ils prêchent Jésus-Christ, ils instruisent les peuples, ils rendent témoignage à la vérité, aussitôt qu'ils sont remplis. O plénitude désirable, qui, loin de charger et d'appesantir l'âme, l'élève, la porte, et fait aller à Dieu! Remplissez-nous Esprit Saint, afin que nous apprenions de vous et à

parler et à nous taire, quand votre gloire, le bien de votre Eglise, et notre profession le demanderont.”—*Quesnel*.

³ “Quomodo qui aliqua disciplina plenus est, quia perfecte eam habet, eruditè et subtiliter potest de ea proferre sermonem: sic qui Spiritum Sanctum consummate acceperint, ita ut impleantur eo, cum fiducia verbum Dei loquuntur, quia præsens Spiritus Sanctus aliquam Deo vocem ministrat.”—*Didymus de Spiritu Sancto*, lib. i.

(12) *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*
 (13) *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*¹

The effect of the exercise of the power of speaking in diverse tongues was twofold on the multitude. Some inquired, *What meaneth this?* what does this strange thing portend?
 Stier. Others mocked,² and said, *These men are full of new wine!*
 Novarinus. *New*, that is, sweet wine, which had a more intoxicating effect than old wine, because on account of its sweetness it was drunk more copiously. It was a must or unfermented wine which could be kept good, and was still a new wine the year after it had been made.³ It is, however, most likely
 Bengel. a mere senseless scoff, a proverbial form of speech to account for the unwonted fact that these Galileans, *unlearned*
 Acts iv. 13.¹ *and ignorant men* as they were considered, were able to address the multitudes assembled at the feast in their own peculiar languages.⁴

No work so good, none so holy, but unbelievers will deride and impute what they cannot understand to some other cause than the true one. Natural man will always attribute supernatural effects to natural causes, since these
 Marianna. are the only ones which he at all comprehends, as Festus could only see in the enthusiasm of St. Paul the effects of
 Bengel. one *beside* himself.
 Acts xxvi. 24.

¹ See note at p. 61 of Introduction.

² "δια-χλευάζοντες, the compound verb is a stronger word than the simple verb, and means vehemence and continuance in mocking. Comp. δια-γογγύξω, Luke xv. 2; xix. 7."—Wordsworth.

³ "ὅτι γλεύκους μεμεστωμένοι εἰσι—musto pleni sunt isti. מלא כוסים. Est autem γλεύκος hic, γλυκασμός, Joel iii. 18, Amos ix. 13, *sapa*, vel *defrutum*, vinum ex musto decoctum, eoque perpetuam dulcedinem retinens."—Grotius. "Non obstat, quo minus per γλεύκος mustum intelligamus, quod Pentecostes tempore mustum non sit, ut putabat ad h. l. Beza: nam mustum si vas à frigore ambiatur, dulce permanet longo tempore: docente Plutarcho *Quæst. Natur.* pag. 928."—Elsner.

"Lucas videtur illud musti genus intelligere, quod Plinius ἀειγλεύκος,

reliqui scriptores generis nomine γλεύκος nuncuparunt. Veteres sic præpararunt, ut contra suam naturam, qua, quum fervet, in vinum mutatur, per longum temporis spatium integrum et incorruptum se conservaret, atque per totum annum mustum maneret hujusque jucundum saporem retineret Vid. Jo. Ern. Imman. Walchii diss. de natura et indole τοῦ γλεύκους."—Rosenmüller.

⁴ "Rabba saith—Rabbah and R. Zeira feasted together on the feast of Purim, and אֵיבְסָמָא they were sweetened, or made very mellow. The Gloss is, and they were sweetened, i. e. they were drunk. So that the γλεύκους μεμεστωμένοι εἰσι is nothing but what they were wont to express in their common dialect אֵיבְסָמָא, they are sweetened, that is, are drunk."—Lightfoot, *Horæ Heb. et Talmud.*

(14) *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words :*

Standing up with the eleven, so that the voice was the voice of the whole eleven speaking through the lips of one. *Standing* as the spokesman of the disciples, and bold in defence of others, as was characteristic of this Apostle, Peter *lifted up his voice* with all boldness, and not merely said (ἔειπεν), but *spake forth* (ἀπεφθέγγετο) *the words of truth and soberness*. Divine Providence having allowed some to mock, so that the Apostle might declare not only to those assembled in Jerusalem, but to the Christian Church throughout all time, the truth as to Christ's death and resurrection.

Blunt's Early Church, cap. 1.

Novarinus.

Acts xxvi. 25. Bengel.

Chrysostom.

In this we see *the power of the resurrection*. The Apostle, who through fear of a maid-servant had a short time before vehemently denied Christ, now as boldly declares Him to be his Lord, and is courageous in defence of his fellow-disciples.¹ In this is evidenced the greatness of the distance between the natural weakness of man and the strength accorded by divine grace. This grace it was which made of fugitives resolute witnesses of the truth, which transformed those who denied Christ into earnest confessors, which changed the timid disciples into heroes, encouraged the fearful to encounter their persecutors with the sword of the Spirit, and made the unlearned fishermen of Galilee eloquent orators, able to convince the wise men of the world of the truth which their Master had made known to them, and had commissioned them to declare to mankind.

Phil. iii. 10.

Chrysostom.

Dion. Carth.

Matt. xxviii. 19.

He addresses them as *Men of Judæa*, as native Jews, and as *dwellers in Jerusalem*, that is, foreign Jews and proselytes from among the Gentiles. *Men of Judæa* who had knowledge of the Scriptures of truth, for *unto them* had been committed *the oracles of God*, and *ye that dwell at Jerusalem*, and therefore have abundant opportunities of knowing the meaning of the law and the declarations of the prophets, *hearken unto my words*, full of the new wine of the Spirit, not of that of earth.²

Fromond.

Rom. iii. 3.

Lyra. Hugo de S. Charo.

¹ "Non dixit: non enim nos ebrii sumus sed, non enim hi ebrii sunt. Optimi pastoris munus exercet, qui propriæ injuriæ oblitus, suos calumniæ imit, suos defendit, nullâ sui curâ negitur. Optima boni pastoris con-

signatio ista est; et pastores audire non merentur, qui suorum nomine, fama rebusque neglectis, commodis propriis incumbunt, propriæ gloriæ."—Novarinus.

² "Quamvis irrideant, verum dicunt,

Cook.

This speech of St. Peter is noteworthy, since it is the first Christian sermon: the firstfruits of the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church.

1 Thess. v. 7.

(15) *For these are not drunken, as ye suppose seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*

Ephes. v. 19.

Cassiodorus.

Gangreus.

Fromond.

Lightfoot.
Lange.

These men are not drunken as, or not in the way that, ye suppose, not with wine wherein is excess, but filled with the joy and power of the Spirit,¹ and that according to the predictions of the Prophet Joel. This ought to be known to you, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. That is, it was about eight o'clock in the morning, or a little after, as at this time of the year the sun rose about four o'clock, and the third hour is half way between sun-rise and noon.

This third hour of the day, the first hour of prayer, corresponded with the time of the morning sacrifice, till which hour, and especially on feast days, the Jews were not allowed to taste any food.²

Is. xlv. 3.
Ezek. xi.
19; xxxvi.
27. Joel ii.
28, 29. Zech.
xii. 10.
John vii.
33. Acts x.
45; xxi. 9.

(16) *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; (17) And it shall come to pass in the*

quia non vino veteri quod in nuptiis Ecclesiæ deficit Joan. ii. 3, sed musto gratiæ spiritualis pleni erant. Nam vinum novum in utres novos versat, Matt. ix. 17. Et jam non in vetustate litteræ sed novitate spiritus Dei magnalia resonabat, Rom. vii. 6."—*Hugo de S. Charo.*

¹ "Homo ebrius non alienam discit linguam, sed suam perdit; sed facti sunt Apostoli novi utres pleni vino novo."—*Augustine.*

² The three hours of prayer amongst the Jews are the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour. The *third* is said to have been instituted by Abraham. It was the hour of the daily morning sacrifice. The *sixth* hour, that of noon, is said to have been appointed by Isaac, and that of the *ninth* hour by Jacob. This was the time of the evening sacrifice. At the sixth hour of the day Peter went up upon the housetop to pray (Acts x. 9). And at the ninth we are told that *Peter and John went up together into the temple to pray, at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour* (Acts iii. 1). The

Christian observance of these hours is based on the Jewish rule as well as on other facts. The third hour of the day was that on which Our Lord was given over to be crucified, and that on which the gift of the Holy Ghost was given to the assembled disciples. This one hour being marked by both facts, and appropriately so, since the latter was that gift which was promised to us in the crucifixion of Our Lord. Rectus crucis et nexus spiritus (*Novarinus*). S. Basil tells us that nine o'clock was observed by the early Church for this very reason, that at this time the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured upon the disciples. Κατὰ τὴν τρίτην ὥραν εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν ἀποστάσα ὑπομενήσεν τας, τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος δωρίας κατὰ τρίτην ὥραν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις δεδομένης.—*Basil. Regul. fus. exp. Exp. xxxvii.* Amongst the Jews it was forbidden to touch food until after the morning sacrifice, i.e. until after three o'clock. 'Non licet homini gustare quidquam, antequam oraverit orationem suam,' Berachoth f. 28. 2.—(*Lightfoot.*)

last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

The Apostle appeals to the Prophet Joel, because this is as a conclusive testimony to the Jews, and though they might refuse assent to the words of Christ they were unable to do so, according to their own principles, when the words of a prophet were cited. *This is that*, not which was predicted, but *was spoken by the prophet Joel*—uttered through his mouth by God Himself, not by man; and to be believed, because it is the declaration of Him who cannot receive nor be deceived.¹ The prophets did but declare the words of God; and thus Isaiah begins his prophecies by saying, *The Lord hath spoken* the truth about to be declared through his lips; and Jeremiah at the commencement of his prophecies is careful to declare, *The word of the Lord come to me, saying*. And so these, like the rest of the prophets, not only at the beginning of their prophecies, but repeatedly throughout their books, claim for their words that they are not theirs, but the Lord's. Nor is this peculiar to the old prophets, the prophets of the Christian Church do the same. If St. Paul speaks as *an apostle*, he does so as not sent by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father; and St. John makes known what *must shortly come to pass* because of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto His servants.

In the last days—Joel's word is afterwards —after those

¹ "Dixit Apostolus potius τοῦτο ἔστι εἰρημένον, quam τοῦτο ἔστι τὸ παραμμένον, quia non versiculus quis, sed continuata verborum series, que integer sermo allegatur, cujus finis sensus de donis prophetiæ et signarum, ex meritis Christi ultimis temporibus in Apostolos redundantibus, intelligendus est, docente Petro. Concluit itaque hoc modo Apostolus non ipsam scripturam, quam scripturæ usum Judæis exponere, atque iis ostendere, illum miraculum istud quod modo contigerat, respicere, ita ut Apostoli de ebrietate non sunt culpan- di; nec obstupescendum esse hac parte, quasi id quod contigerat, paradoxum aliquod esset, quoniam Prophetæ Joël de eo ante aliquod sæcula

quam prophetaverat, sicut nec ipsi veterum Hebræorum Theologi negant, huncce Joël's locum de Messiae temporibus loqui."—*Surenhusius*.

² "The quotation from the prophecy of Joel—in the Hebrew, ch. ii. 28—30; in the Septuagint, ch. iii. 1-5—is taken, with a few slight variations, from the Septuagint. The chief variations are the following: Instead of ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις (ver. 17), the Septuagint has μετὰ ταῦτα, in which it agrees with the Hebrew. The two last clauses of ver. 17 are in the Septuagint transposed. In ver. 18 the words καὶ προφητεύσουσιν are added; and in ver. 19, ἄνω and κάτω are wanting in the Septuagint."—*Gloag*.

things which he had predicted about Christ had been fulfilled—after His ministry was completed and He had ascended into heaven, then should happen what he goes on to predict. *The last days* frequently mean the time of the New Testament dispensation, and of the law of grace: frequently, however, it means only the latter days, or the future, as in the prophecy of Jacob, in which he speaks of *the last days* as the time before the coming of Christ. The Jewish commentators, however, acknowledge that the time *the last days* is only applicable to the times of the Messiah, whilst *the last day* means the day of judgment. Thus Kimchi says that the *afterwards* spoken of by Joel is the same as *the last days* spoken of by Isaiah, which latter is a clear prophecy of the exaltation of Christ; so that as it is evident there was no time before the coming of Christ and the outpouring of spiritual gifts on the day of Pentecost, when it could be asserted that the promise was made good, so there has been no time since in which it can be said to have been fulfilled.¹

I will pour out. In this the largeness of the gift is pointed out. It shall be given not in drops nor by measure, but in unstinted fulness. It shall be like the affusion of water poured out upon the people in baptism.² *I will pour out of My spirit on all flesh*—on Jew and Gentile, contrary to the Jewish proverb, which says that the Holy Spirit is never imparted to any Gentile. Hence the astonishment of the first Jewish converts when upon *the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost*: upon all conditions of men, whatever their station may be, poor and rich alike, on women as well as on men, for in Christ is *neither male nor female*: on you who now wonder and even mock, if hereafter you accept the truth: on the whole man, body as well as soul, all that shall be brought nigh to God by the Incarnation of Christ, by His taking to Himself the flesh of all men.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, shall have the gift of explaining prophecies, and teaching as well as predicting the future. They *prophesy* whom God endues with power to declare what shall hereafter happen, as well as those who interpret the Scriptures under His guidance.

¹ "The prophet Joel has it אַחֲרֵי־כֵן, after these things; Greek, μετὰ ταῦτα, after these things. Where Kimchi upon this place hath this note: 'And it shall come to pass after these things' is the same with καὶ ἔσται ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, it shall come to pass 'in the last days.' By *the last days* is to be

understood the last days of Jerusalem, and the Jewish economy, viz. when the τέλος τοῦ αἰῶνος Ἰουδαϊκοῦ, the end of the Jewish world (vide Matt. xxiv. 3, and 1 Cor. x. 11) drew near."—*Lightfoot*.

² "Verbum effusionis sensum largitatis ostendit."—*S. Jerome*.

Gen. xlix. 1.
Lorinus.

Cook.

אֲחֵרֵי־כֵן

אֲחֵרֵי־כֵן

אֲחֵרֵי־כֵן

Whitby.

Cajetan.
Slier.

Lorinus.

Gangæus.

Lightfoot.

Acts x. 45.

Hugo de S.
Chiaro.
Gal. iii. 28.

Chrysostom.

Lorinus.

Hugo de S.
Chiaro.

his was the twofold office of the Prophet in the old dispensation, and of the Apostles and others in the new. *And your young men shall see visions*, as St. Peter and St. Paul did, when the one was to baptize Cornelius, and the other as to be converted to Christianity. *Your old men shall dream dreams*, like as when the will of God was revealed to Jacob as he slept, and to Joseph, for in these *diverse manners* did God speak in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.¹

Hofmeister.
Heb. i. 1.

The promise made by the mouth of Joel was 'to your sons and your daughters.' The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were not given only to the Apostles of Christ, but on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards, they were poured out on the assembled disciples, both men and women, and hence we read of the daughters of Philip prophesying, and of the Holy Spirit being poured out in His fulness on the whole household of Cornelius.

Lorinus.
Acts xxi. 9.
Acts x. 44.

Dreams of old were given to others than prophets, and when so given required an explanation from those who were gifted with a prophetic spirit. Thus when Pharaoh's officers dreamed, and when afterwards Pharaoh himself dreamed, Joseph was instructed to interpret the dreams which had troubled the butler and baker, and the monarch himself. When, again, dreams were sent to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was enabled by revelation to interpret the dreams of the king. In the New Testament we read of dreams sent by God to Joseph, to the wise men from the East, and to the wife of Pilate. In the Old Testament we read of *dreams* sent to Abraham, to Abimelech, to Jacob on his way from Beersheba to Haran, to Joseph, to Solomon in his dream. As to *visions*, some of them were given by God to men in sleep, as that which was given to Saul when at Damascus, a Divine communication of Divine light and the Divine will by which the servant of God sees that which God designs to reveal to him of the future. Sometimes this revelation is by sight, sometimes by words without seeing Him who speaks, as in the case of Samuel, to whom the Lord called and revealed His will, but to whom He did not appear.²

Genesis xl.
and xli.
Daniel i. and
iv.
Matt. i. 20;
ii. 13.
Matt. ii. 12.
Matt. xxvii.
19.
Gen. xv. 12.
Gen. xx. 3.
Gen. xxvii.
12.
Gen. xxxviii.
5.
1 Kings iii. 5.
Acts ix. 10.

Lorinus.
1 Sam. iii. 4.

Juvenes vestri visiones videbunt, revelationes divinas atque propheticas verè intelligent. Intelligent enim est opus in visione. *Et maiores vestri somnia somniabunt*, revelationes desuper tempore sui suscipient, quando propter integritatem virtutis imaginativæ, ac sensum exteriorum aptior est anima ad

illuminationes supernas. Propter quod in lib. Job [xxxiii. 15, 16] legitur, *Per somnium in visione nocturna . . aperit Deus aures virorum et erudiens eos instruit disciplina.*"—Dion. Carth.

² "Somnia bona sunt quæ à Deo per Angelos bonos immittuntur: quorum interpretatio, sicuti etiam effectus, à solo Deo est. Ideò non

Acts xxi. 4, 9,
10. 1 Cor.
xii. 10, 28;
xiv. 1.

(18) *And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*

Chrysostom.
Dion. Carth.

To some the grace is imparted silently in dreams of the night or in visions by day; to others it is openly poured out, as on the disciples on the day of Pentecost. This gift was, as we have seen, not confined to men, since we read of the daughters of Philip who prophesied.

Joel ii. 29.

And¹ on my servants and on my handmaidens. In the Prophet Joel it is simply *the servants and the handmaids*, the slaves of the household. Here, since in Christ there are *neither bond nor free*, but *all are one in Christ*, the Apostle, quoting from the Septuagint, varies the words, and speaks of these slaves as *my servants and . . . my handmaidens*.

Gal. iii. 28.

Those who have been redeemed from slavery to Satan are made free as servants of Christ.

Fromond.

Joel ii. 30, 31.

(19) *And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:*

Lienard.

Having spoken of the gifts of the Spirit poured out on the day of Pentecost, the Prophet at once goes on to speak of the *wonders and signs* which shall be evidenced in *the last days*, the time which will precede *the great day of the Lord*, as if to show that the dispensation ushered in by these *wonders and signs* will endure unto the end of time. Indeed, we know that the self-same *wonders* which were given at the coming of Christ and at His ascension, the close of the Jewish dispensation, will be again given at His second coming, for *He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven*. Thus, as angels appeared at His birth and again at His ascension, so will it be at His second coming to judge the quick and the dead.²

Acts i. 11.

Dion. Carth.

sunt humanitus per artem observanda somnia ad præcognoscenda futura, quia est Deus in cælo revelans mysteria, ut dicitur apud Daniele[m] [ii, 28]. Somnia verò, quæ ex affectu vehementi aut humore aliquo, aut imaginatione prodeunt, quia causam suam talia significant non autem eventos futuros; ideo etiam non sunt observanda.”—*Salmeron*.

¹ “Καίτε =  annexes an emphatic

addition, *and even on*. The Prophet declares that no condition of men, however ignoble, would exclude them from the promise.”—*Hackett*.

² “Sicut res olim gestæ typus sunt hujus redemptionis; ita etiam verba prophetarum, quibus eas prædixerunt, duplicem habent sensum, literalem unum qui olim in typo secundum literam sed imperfectè impletus est: mysticum alterum, qui perfectè et ætun-

Blood poured out at the crucifixion of Christ, and again, according to the imprecation of the Jews, poured out upon them and their children at the siege of Jerusalem, as well as that *blood* which flowed so copiously in the early persecutions which followed the preaching of the Gospel. The *blood* of Christ poured out upon the cross was indeed a sign—

(1) Because it is not usual for blood to flow out in a stream from the body of one dying.

(2) Because with the blood, water was also poured out, which is a marvel in itself.

Fire in this prophecy refers both to the fall of Jerusalem and that of which it was a type, the judgment to come. Many were to be the signs by fire, as—

(1) The efficacy and operation of the Holy Spirit, which gives warmth to the soul and splendour to the operations of the spirit.

(2) The *signs* of His power in *blood and fire* which were given in the martyrdom of His servants and in the strength given to men through the Spirit to confess Christ in the midst of cruel persecutions.

(3) The falling of the stars from heaven, at the end of the world, according to the prediction of Christ Himself.

By vapour of smoke may be meant—

(1) The blindness of the Jews, and their deeds against the truth, during the time of their blindness, or

(2) The conflagrations which shall arise from the operations of war when *nation shall rise against nation* in the latter days.

God's judgments are preceded by these *wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath*, and hence when Christ showed His head on the cross, we read that the rocks were rent, that the earth quaked, and that the veil of the temple was rent in twain. And when Jerusalem was besieged, and at the end conquered and destroyed by the Romans, Josephus remarks on the wonders and signs, the *σημεία* and the *τέρατα* which preceded its fall.

(20) *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,¹ before that great and notable day of the Lord come:*

omnem vim et energiam literæ impositus est in antitypo. Qui sensus pleonastice inde elucet, quod verba secundum litteralem sensum olim impleta in tempore, dilute admodum sint accipienda multo augustius quid sonant, quam in typo impletum fuit: Quod in antitypo est, omnem hujus prophetiæ

sensum typicâ illâ impletione non esse exhaustum; sed alium sublimiorem ac augustiorem sub illâ latere, quem Deus suo tempore revelaturus est, et in opere illo redemptionis secundum omnem litteræ vim, ac propriè non figuratè, impleturus."—*Limborch*.

¹ "Ὁ ἥλιος μετασπαρήσεται εἰς

As at the crucifixion of Christ *the sun* was darkened, not by a natural eclipse, but supernaturally, so will it be before the day of judgment—then, too, *the moon* shall be red as blood, as a presage of the *notable*, or terrible, or glorious (ἐπιφανὴς) day of the Lord, that is, the day appointed by God for judging the nations of earth.

Hugo de S.
Charo.
Morus.

These predictions, though they have their final and complete fulfilment at the day of the general judgment of mankind, and only then, yet have their partial fulfilment in the evils which befell the Jewish people at the time of their captivity; and, again, in the calamities which happened to them at the fall of Jerusalem, the day of terrible judgment on this rebellious city, which was in itself a type of the terrors of the last day. These signs and prodigies, for it is not miracles merely which are here referred to, were given—

Euthymius.

Coeceus.

(1) At the crucifixion of Christ, when the *sun* was turned into darkness, when the earth quaked both at the death and resurrection of Christ, and the rocks were rent, when He, the true Rock, gave up the ghost.

Cyril.
Chrysostom.
Theophylact.

(2) At the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, which destruction was ushered in by numerous wonders and portents.¹

Rom. x. 13.

(21) *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Whosoever of the whole human race, whether Jew or Gentile, whether bond or free, whether learned or unlearned, for God is no respecter of persons, shall call upon the name of the Lord, not in that terrible day of the Lord, but now, before that day has come, for *now is the accepted time*, such an one shall be saved.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Fromond.

Chrysostom.

Such a call, such an invocation of *the name of the Lord*, is not that of the lips only, but of the heart and affections, and must spring from an earnest love to Him on whom we call.² It implies real belief or faith in Him, for *how shall*

σκότος. 'Hac phrasi Hebræi describere solent vel eclipsin solis, vel spissas nebulas, quando nebulis spissis dies in noctem videtur mutari. Καὶ ἡ σελήνη εἰς αἷμα. sc. μετεωροφῆσεται luna in sanguinem mutabitur. Est descriptio eclipseos lunaris, ubi nobis apparet luna veluti globus sanguineus.'—Rosenmüller. It is of course clear that no ordinary eclipse could be meant, as this would be in the ordinary course of nature, and so be neither a wonder nor

a sign.

¹ "Differt τέρας ἀ σημείον hoc enim sumitur etiam pro quo libet signo extra miraculum; at τέρας semper sumitur pro portento vel prodigio' (Mintert). A miracle is a δύναμις as wrought by divine power; a τέρας is a supernatural prodigy; a σημείον is a sign or credential of a mission from God."—Wordsworth.

² "ὅς ἂν ἐπικαλέσθαι. Habet verbum ἐπικαλεῖσθαι in literis sacris sig-

They call on Him in whom they have not believed. Only to such is this promise given, for not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven; but to those who call without thus believing in God and without doing His will it is declared, then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer: they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find me.

Rom. x. 14.

Matt. vii. 21.

Prov. i. 28.
Lormus.

Some have understood these words to contain the promise of that temporal deliverance which was wondrously given to the Christian Church at Jerusalem, by its withdrawal in safety to Pella, before the siege of the city, and thus that the words *shall be saved* mean *saved* from the dire calamities which befell the Jews. Though this may be included in the promise, since the *great and terrible day of the Lord* was foreshadowed in the judgment which fell upon the forsaken city, and, therefore, deliverance from this temporal judgment is a type of that other and greater deliverance at the last, yet the full meaning of the promise has doubtless reference to the deliverance from the wrath to come, the prediction of that blessedness to which all those who call in faith upon God shall attain in the *great and terrible day*.¹

Kuinoel.

Wordsworth.

Bengel.

(22) *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*

John iii. 2;
xiv. 10, 11.
Acts x. 28;
Heb. ix. 4.

Ye men of Israel—children of the Patriarch, though not inheritors of the faith of your father Israel—members of those families to whom belong the prophets—ye who possess and ought to know the oracles of God.² *Hear these words*—*hear* by believing, *hear* so as to believe. In the use of these words St. Peter calls attention to the great importance of the truth which he is about to declare, and claims the at-

Fromond.

Hugo de S.
Charo.
Salmeron.

ificationem precatonis ardentis im-
plorantis opem divinam, et non fortuitam
compellationem, inquit Camerarius.
Ieroditus idem verbum de iis usurpat
ui spem salutis in aliorum ope ponunt
tunc ideo eos in auxilium vocant.”—
Raphelius.

¹ “Le vrai culte n’est plus attaché à
un peuple. Le christianisme est une
religion universelle. Invoquer le
Seigneur, c’est ne mettre son espérance
qu’en lui et n’attendre que de lui la

grace de faire sa volonté. Quelle bonté
de Dieu d’avoir ainsi abrégé la voye
du salut, en renfermant tout dans la
foy et dans la prière!”—Quesnel.

² “Ἰσραηλῖται nomen honoris, quo
gloriabantur Judæi, vide 2 Cor. xi. 22.
Ab Israeli vero, non a Jacobo nomen
ducebant, quia illud a Deo ipso tradi-
tum Jacobo dicitur Gen. xxxii. 28, ut
esset gratiæ divinæ symbolum; v. Kop-
pius in epist. ad Romanos ix. 4.”—
Kuinoel.

tention of his hearers to that which concerned them so highly.

Sanchez.

The Apostle speaks of our Lord as *Jesus of Nazareth*, using the name by which the Jews recognized Him. There were many amongst the Jews of the name of Jesus, but Peter's words concern only *this Jesus*, as he afterwards calls Him. The addition of *Nazareth* is one of humiliation, though Peter would hardly have used it with this meaning. He makes use of it simply to indicate who it was of whom he was speaking.¹

In the previous verse the Apostle declares that *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*. He here proceeds to show by argument who *the Lord* is on whom they are to call, and he enforces conviction of His claim to be God, one with the Father, by these considerations—

John x. 30.

(1) From the wonders and miracles which He wrought, and appealed to in attestation of His claim to be the Messiah promised afore by the mouth of God Himself.

Sanchez.

(2) From the signs and portents at His crucifixion, and also those which attended His resurrection from the grave.

(3) From the gifts of the Holy Ghost given by Him according to His promise to His disciples, which gifts were beyond the power of man to bestow.

Baumgarten.

(4) From prophecy, since only in Christ were the predictions of Joel as well as David fulfilled. And that those to whom he appealed were without excuse for their rejection and crucifixion of Christ St. Peter shows by reminding them that the *miracles and wonders and signs which God wrought by Him* were done not only on their behalf, but were also wrought in the *very midst* of those who crucified Him.

Menochius.
Hugo de S.
Charo.

The force of those *miracles and wonders and signs*, in which three words are expressed the origin, the effect, and the use or intent of these mighty works,² was to mark out

Cook.

¹ "Quoniam vulgè appellabatur et cognominabatur à loco ipso, tanquàm qui esset obscurior, ut rem exaggeret, ad hunc modum loquitur, Jesum illum vulgarem contemptibilemque, etc. Eòdem respexerunt fortasse Angeli resuscitatum nunciantes [Mar. xvi. 16] et Christus ipse Saulum inelamans et vocans [Act. xxii. 8]. Quamquam cognomen id tributum legimus non ab hominibus tantùm Judæis [Act. vi. 14], et à Pilato in titulo crucis [Jo. xix. 19], verum etiam à Dæmone [Mar. i. 24], et à prophetis [Mat. ii. 23], et à discipulis [Luc. xxiv. 19], et à Petro

sæpius [Act. iii. 6; iv. 10], atque à Paulo aliquando [Act. xxvi. 9], et à Stephano [Act. vi. 14]."—*Lorinus*.

² "Miracula distinguuntur per signa et prodigia sive portenta et per virtutes."—*Th. Aquinas. Sum. Sec. quæst. clxxviii. art. 1, § 3.*

"Miracles are called *δυνάμεις*, because they are wrought by divine power; *τέρατα*, prodigies, because they appear inexplicable to men; and *σημεῖα*, signs, because they attest the character or claims of those who perform them, 2 Cor. xii. 12. See Olshausen on Matt. viii. 1."—*Hackett*.

Christ as a man approved of God, demonstrated and manifested before the eyes of the people as that very Messiah who was to save the people from their sins.¹ Hammond.

(23) *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified² and slain :* Matt. xxvi. 24, Luke xxii. 24; xxiv. 44. Acts iii. 13; iv. 23; v. 30.

Those who most offended God by the murder of His Son were yet fulfilling His *counsel*, and doing according to His *foreknowledge*. These words have not the same meaning—the will, or *counsel* and *foreknowledge* of God are not the same. By the first, *βουλή*, is meant His eternal purpose, by the latter, *πρόγνωσις*, the omniscience by which all things are foreseen and remembered. The murder which the Jewish people and rulers had determined on, and which He knew they would do, He did not avoid or prevent. Here was His own foreknowledge shown, but this had no relation to the sin of the Jews in the murder. God forbids every sinful action, He does not always prevent such sinful actions, nor overrule the free will of His creatures. Quesnel. Calvin. Alford. Corn. à Lap. Whithy.

From our ignorance of the nature of God, and the general limitation of our intellectual faculties, we cannot determine the boundary-line between His foreknowledge and power. We can yet see that there is a line of demarcation. As to ourselves, because we are imperfect, we know imperfectly, but with greater or less degrees of conviction, that certain things will happen, but such knowledge is in no sense the cause. God, who is perfect, must needs know perfectly that such things will take place, but there is in neither case any necessary connection between knowledge and the motive cause of action. All we can be sure of is, that He foresees and could prevent that which yet, for reasons unknown to us, He permits.

Him being delivered—by whom is not expressed. He was *delivered* to the Jews by the Father when He was sent into the world. He *delivered* Himself into their hands when by the exercise of His power He might have avoided the danger which threatened Him, or escaped out of the hands of those who sought His life. He was *delivered* to the Jews

¹ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀποδεειγμένον—Approbatus ille a Deo dicitur, cuius auctoritatem dedit.”—Hardouin.

² “προσπῆξαντες ἀνείλατε: have nailed up and slain. One is almost as literal as the other, but as the writer has not used the usual word *σταυρώω*,

to crucify, it is well to mark the change.”—*Sharpe*. “The harshness and unworthiness of the deed are strongly set forth by a word expressing the mechanical act merely, *having nailed up*, as in contrast with the former clause from *Ἰησοῦν τοῦ ἡμῶν*.”—*Alford*.

by His own disciple. He was *delivered* to the Romans to be put to death by the chief priests and rulers and the whole nation of the Jews.¹ St. Peter seems to have introduced this word—

Gorranus.

(1) As though in anticipation of an objection, that had Christ been thus almighty the Jews could not by violence have taken and crucified Him. He shows that Christ was *delivered*, that He *delivered* Himself into their hands.

Corn. & Lap.

(2) In order to afford some consolation to the perpetrators of so great a sin, as Joseph, the type of our Blessed Lord, lightened the bitterness of his brothers' self-reproach—*Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*

Bengel.

Gen. xlv. 5.

By wicked hands have crucified. St. Peter leaves it indeterminate as to whom these words apply. He is usually understood to mean the Gentiles, the Romans, who actually nailed our Lord to the cross. His words, however, include all those, Jew as well as Gentile, who caused or assisted at His death. Whom *ye have crucified by means of the wicked hands of others.*

Lyra, Cajetan.

Corn. & Lap.

In the mystery of the surrender of Our Blessed Lord to be crucified, let us remember that though man designed that which was evil, God turned it into good; and that in this, though man's evil was not the less, yet the bounty and love of God was made the more evident.²

Hofmeister. 7

Acts iii. 15;
iv. 10; x.
40; xiii. 30,
34; xvii. 31.
Rom. iv.
24; viii. 11.
1 Cor. vi.
14; xv. 15.
2 Cor. iv. 14.
Gal. i. 1.
Eph. i. 20.
Col. ii. 12.
1 Thess. i.
10. Heb.
xiii. 20. 1
Pet. i. 21.

(24) *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.*

St. Peter would impress upon those who heard him that the hand of the Father was in all that was done. He it was who *approved* or demonstrated Christ to be the Messiah. He it was who wrought *wonders and miracles and signs* in attestation of this. He it was who by His counsel *delivered*

1 "Traditus est Christus à Patre et à seipso, ut homines redimeret: à diabolo ut redemptionem impediret et traditores in peccatum traheret: à Juda per avaritiam: à Judæis per invidiam: à Pilato per timorem, ne parum videretur Cæsaris amicus, atque adeò de suo loco, atque existimatione caderet."—*Sanchez.*

2 "Deus quidem morte filii sui voluit mundum salvare, sed Judæi non salvare mundum sed perdere Christum statuer-

unt. Sic alibi in Genesi legimus Joseph fratribus suis dicentem: Non vestro consilio sed Dei voluntate huc missus sum. Sed hoc non excusat fratres ipsius, quia ipsi nihil tale cogitaverant. Unde in eodem libro Joseph illis loquitur: Vos cogitastis malum de me, sed Deus vertit illud in bonum. Ergo malitia impiorum excusanda non est, sed predicanda et laudanda est bonitas Dei, qui malitiam impiorum in piorum commodum vertit."—*Hofmeister.*

Christ to death. He it was who raised Him up and loosed
 the pains of death. Alford.

He was raised up in that flesh which they contemned, in
 that body of humiliation which was an offence to so many
 of them. God hath raised Him; that is, He, who is God, Hugo de S.
Charo.
 raised His human nature from the grave, according to His
 own words—*I have power to lay it down, and I have power*
to take it again; and, again, *Destroy this temple, and in three*
days I will raise it up, when we know that He spake of
 the temple of His body. John x. 18.
John ii. 19,
21.
Dion. Carth.

Having loosed the pains of death for us, and in His own
 person also. He has for us loosed those pains by His resur- Hugo de S.
Charo.
 rection, since in His rising He has given to us an assurance
 and pledge of our own resurrection from the dead, and thus
 has taken away the pain of the separation of soul and body. Cajetan.
 For if He could not be holden of death, we must remember
 that in this He is our first-fruits, and His resurrection the
 pattern of our own.¹ Salmeron.
Dion. Carth.

These pains in which He could not be holden were bonds,
 and are so translated. By these bonds of death He could Rosenmüller.
 not be holden, since He was the Life itself, He by whom
 the whole power of death was to be broken. *It was not* Wolfius.
possible that He should be so holden, since He was the strong
 man who was to overcome all enemies of God and man, and Stier.
 because it had been foretold by God through the mouth of
 the prophets that He was to arise from the tomb, and thus Lange,
 show Himself the conqueror of death.²

(25) *For David speaketh concerning Him,³ I fore- Ps. xvi. 8.
 saw the Lord always before my face, for He is on
 my right hand, that I should not be moved :*

St. Peter here shows from the Psalm which he quotes
 that to be uninjured by death and the grave is an essential
 characteristic of Him who was of old promised to David as

¹ "Simplicius est et textui con-
 veniens: ut ad Christum ipsum, quod
 de dicitur, referatur: quia per resur-
 rectionem, ab inferni seu mortis dolor-
 is solutus est, id est, morti, quæ
 pena quædam est, exemptus et vitæ
 constitutus; quia secundum prophetarum
 sententiam, et patris æterni decretum,
 non debuit diu in morte detineri."—
 Stier.

² "Vox ὡδιν h. l. respondet hebraico
 quod proprie funem, vinculum

denotat, deinde vero ad dolores partus
 et dolores gravissimos transfertur, 2
 Sam. xxii. 6; Psal. xviii. 5, 6. Sed
 h. l. ὡδιν, vincula denotare videntur,
 quibus etiam verba λέναι atque κρατεῖσ-
 θαι optime conveniunt, ad dolores au-
 tem transferri non possunt."—Rosen-
 müller.

³ "De eo. Ita Syrus, putà de
 Christo. Vel in eum, id est, in persona
 ejus, ait Cajetan. David enim in Christi
 persona hæc dixit."—Corn. à Lapide.

the King of Israel, and that David in this Psalm was expressly speaking of Christ.¹

Baumgarten.

Dion. Carth.

Calvin.

Lorinus.

Calvin.

Matt. xxvi.
53.

I foresaw, that is, saw before me, vividly, the Lord, and by this was sustained in my agony in the garden and on Calvary.² True are these words also of His followers, for nothing more emboldens us in the midst of danger than the consciousness of God's presence. For *He is on my right hand*, near to assist, and ever ready to help His people in danger. So that in no possible danger by which we can be menaced is He not present and able to deliver us, as He was present with and able with *twelve legions of angels* to deliver His Only Begotten Son from the hands of His persecutors.

Ps. xvi. 9.

(26) *Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:*

כְּבוֹדִי

γλῶσσά μου.

Psalm lvii. 8.

Psalm cviii. 1.

In the Hebrew it is *my glory*, in the Septuagint, from which St. Peter quotes, it is *my tongue*. In the Prayer-Book version this clause reads, "I will give praise with the best member that I have." The tongue may be called the "glory" of man, as it is "the best member" that he has. Thus, *awake up, my glory*; that is, my tongue—awake, *lute and harp*; again, *I will sing and give praise, even with my glory*; when in the Prayer-Book version it is, "I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have."³

Therefore did my heart, that part which comprises the will and the reason of man, rejoice with the knowledge that the Father was my defender, and ever present on my right

¹ "In Acts xiii. 36 St. Paul too denies the applicability of that passage to David, and insists on its exclusive reference to the Messiah. We may conclude, therefore, that they regarded the entire Psalm as Messianic; for we have in it but one speaker from commencement to end, and in other respects, such a marked unity of thought and structure, that it would be an arbitrary procedure to assign one part of it to David and another to Christ."—*Hackett*.

² "*David enim dicit in Eum*, id est de Christo, ita quod verba sequentia ad literam in Christi persona dicuntur *providebam Dominum coram me semper*, id est, Ego ut homo, Deum jugiter iutuebar, atque in omnibus provide-

coram Eo conversabar. Nam anima Christi à primo suæ creationis instanti, vidit Deum per speciem tam clarè incessanter, ut modo *quoniam a dexteris est mihi*, id est, in omnibus gratiosè mihi assistit, secundum illud Esa. *Ecce Dominus Deus auxiliator meus* l. g. [i. e. L. ix.]. *Ne commovear*, id est à via æquitatis et veritatis usquam recedam; intantum enim affuit naturæ assumptæ, quod peccare nequivit."—*Dion. Carthusianus*.

³ "This paraphrase of the word *glory* was very appropriate on the day of Pentecost, when in a special manner the *tongues* of the apostles were made instruments for declaring God's *glory* in the world, and of promoting their own *glory* in heaven."—*Wordsworth*.

and, and my tongue was glad. The heart within and the tongue without are here represented as rejoicing in the consciousness of the presence of God. Moreover also My flesh, because it shall share in the resurrection, in the future glory and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, shall rest in hope.

Lorinus.

Salmeron.

Lorinus.

(27) *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

In the Hebrew it is the *Gracious One*, instead of the *Holy One*—

(1) The *Gracious One*, the Giver of all grace, the channel through which Divine grace is given to man.

(2) He on whom the good pleasure of the Father for ever rests.

Bengel.

Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, in the place, that is, of departed spirits, *neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One*, that is, the flesh which is holy through union with Thee, *to see corruption*.¹ Because of the hypostatic union of the Divine nature with the flesh, which He took in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, Christ's flesh in the tomb was preserved from becoming corrupt. He had indeed suffering flesh, but flesh which was preserved from this form of suffering by the presence of Divinity.²

Lorinus.

The word *see* is extended to all experience by means of

¹ "Non sanctificatum corpus, per quod alii sanctificandi sunt, corrumpi poterit."—*S. Augustine in Ps. xvi.*

² "*Animam meam.* Nam Christus anima descendit ad inferos, præcipuè ad eam partem, quam Sinum Abrahamæ evangelium vocat ad solvendo inferni atrium dolores eosque liberandos. Semper ut victor non ut debitor. Unde non hæc sunt insignia recentiorum errata. Primum quod נֶפֶשׁ, seol, pro sepulchro, nam propriè infernum animarum significat. Secundum, quod animam pro corpore et ut Beza loquitur pro cavere accipiant, indoctè allegantes, Lev. xxi. 1, nam illic et similibus cis paucis נֶפֶשׁ nephesh, i. e. anima non pro corpore sed per synecdochen pro homine mortuo vel potius per metonymiam pro hominis mortui fuisse sumitur, pro cujus anima fiebat

supremum illud officium, ubi est mysterium curæ antiquæ vivorum pro mortuis et mortuorum animabus. Moses enim animam appellat officium supremum peractum pro mortuo, neque respicit corpus sive cadaver, quoniam ejus causa, illa parentalia non tam solenniter fuissent peracta. *Ob animam*, inquit, *ne contaminetur sacerdos* [Lev. xxi. 1], id est, ob hominis mortui funus et exequias, in quibus pro anima ejus parentabatur et iteram *Incisionem ob animam non facietis in carne vestra* [Lev. xxix. 28], ubi Onkelos, 'læsionem pro mortuo ne facietis in carne vestra': et noster, *super mortuo ne incidatis carnes vestras*, id est, pro mortui anima. Nam his locis, ubi dixi, anima non simpliciter significat mortuum sed animam mortui pro qua ista peragebantur."—*Gennebrard in Ps. xv.*

the senses.¹ Thus of Simeon it was said, *He should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ*; and, again, *If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death*. In a similar way we read in several places in Holy Scripture of tasting death. The same use of the senses to imply spiritual apprehension or joy is common throughout the Old and New Testament.

Luke ii. 26.

John viii. 51.

Matt. xvi. 28.

Mark ix. 1.

Luke ix. 27.

Lorinus.

(28) *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*

Thou hast made known to Me—Thou hast raised Me up from the dead, and restored Me again to life. *Thou shalt fill Me with the joy of Thy countenance*, when I sit for ever at Thy right hand.

Bengel.

The ways of life to the Christian are—

(1) That way in which his Master preceded him, the resurrection and glorification of the body.

(2) The way in which He keeps us by preserving us in the faith, by keeping before us His example, by inspiring us with the fear and love of God, by means of which we are united as living members to Him who is *the life*.

Lorinus.

As resurrection to immortality is the way to everlasting life, so was this way opened by Him who rose from the tomb after His crucifixion, and in Him, who is our Representative, to all others who follow in the footsteps of Him who is the first-fruits of them that slept.²

Salmeron.

Thou shalt make Me full, in My whole human nature of body and soul, *with the joy of Thy countenance*, as in My Divine nature I am ever full with the joy and gladness which flows from My union with Thee.

Corn. & Lap.

1 Kings ii. 10.

Acts xiii. 36.

(29) *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.*

Men and brethren. He addresses them as those who were his brethren after the flesh, as children of Israel

¹ "*Videre*, i. e. sentire, experiri. Est catechesis: visus enim omnium sensuum nobilissimus, pro quolibet sensu ponitur in scriptura: hic pro tactu ponitur."—*Corn. & Lapide*.

² "Though St. Peter interprets the Psalm throughout as directly and as primarily applicable to Christ, this does not exclude, however, a true and

literal application to David himself, who was at once a type and spiritually, as an elect of God, a member of Christ. What was true of him as a type is true in a fuller and higher sense of the antitype; and what is true of Christ as the Head, is true by implication and communication of each and all His members."—*Cook*.

equally with himself, and invites them to become brethren and partakers of the same spiritual privileges which he possessed in Christ, the seed promised aforetime to the patriarch Jacob, the common parent of all Israelites. And in naming David he calls him a *patriarch* as the ancestor of the kings of Judæa, as one also to whom the promise of the Messiah had been made, and to whom it had been declared that Christ should sit *on his throne*.

His sepulchre is with us,¹ therefore the words already quoted could not apply to David, since he had been *buried*; *is with us*, therefore he has not risen, and his flesh has been corruption. *His sepulchre is with us*. He is still lying buried on Mount Sion, where most of the kings of Judah were buried. His body, therefore, was not one of those which rose at the time of the resurrection of Christ. The word *saints*, indeed, is appropriated in the New Testament to those who believed in the Incarnate Saviour and followed Christ.

(30) *Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne*; (31) *He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption*.

Being by the acknowledgment of all a *prophet*, it was no marvel that he should foresee and declare that which was to happen so long time after, and should speak of Him to whom the Lord God shall give . . . the throne of His father David: that is, the spiritual rule over the Church of God which was typified in the rule which David had over the people of God.²

¹ Though the tomb of David was known at this time, its situation is now uncertain. It is generally believed to be under the accumulated débris on Mount Zion, that is, the city of David (Kings ii. 10), where most of the preceding kings of Judah were buried. It was pointed out on the return of the captives from Babylon, Neh. iii. 16. Josephus tells us that it was pillaged by John Hyrcanus, the High Priest, who took from it much treasure deposited there by Solomon. Another

portion of the sepulchre was opened by Herod the Great, who took from it a large booty (Joseph. Ant. vii. 15, 3; xiii. 8, 4; xvi. 7, 1). In the time of the Emperor Hadrian the tomb of David had become ruinous (Dion. Cassius, lxi. 14), and these ruins were in existence and known in the time of St. Jerome.

² "*Super sedem ejus*—Vocat sedem David, non temporalem, quam Christus non habuit nec spiritualem quam David non habuit, sed spiritualem significa-

Salmeron.

Tirinus.

Corn. & Lap.

Hackett.

Hardouin.

2 Sam. vii. 13, 13.

Ps. cxxxii. 11.

Luke i. 32, 69.

Rom. i. 3.

2 Tim. ii. 8.

Ps. xvi. 10.

Acts xiii. 35.

Calvin.

Luke i. 32.

Corn. & Lap.

Acts i. 8.

John xiv. 26;
xv. 26; xvi.
7, 13.Acts i. 4; v.
31; x. 45.Eph. iv. 8.
Phil. ii. 9.
Heb. x. 12.

(32) *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.* (33) *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

Lorinus.

John ix. 22.

Salmeron.

Corn. & Lap.
Gorranus.

This Jesus. As at the beginning of his discourse St. Peter distinguishes our Lord by adding of *Nazareth* to His name, so here he adds emphatically *this* to His name, to remind his hearers that he was speaking of no common man who bore this not uncommon name, but of Him whom God had demonstrated to be the same of whom David had spoken, and whom they had seen after His resurrection from the dead. We may well note here the boldness of Peter. He had but lately through fear denied Christ, and the Jews had decreed that whosoever should confess Christ should be put out of the synagogue, yet, now endued with power from on high by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he boldly declares before the people this most unwelcome truth respecting Christ.

Therefore being by the power of Godhead exalted—for this is meant *by the right hand of God*—being exalted by that power by which He triumphed over death and hell, and gloriously rose and ascended into heaven; that is, by His own power, who is Himself the right hand of the Father,¹ *He*

tam et representatam in illa temporali Davidis, ejus spiritualis illa Davidis temporalis erat typas et vocabulum, de qua sede predixerat Esaias: *Super solium David et super regnum ejus sedebit: ut confirmet illud et corroboret in judicio et justitia amodo et usque in sempiternum* [Esai. ix. 7]. Ubi sedes hæc Davidis spiritualis indicatur. Sicut Petra, Christi figura dicitur ab apostolo, Christus [1 Cor. x. 4].”—*Salmeron.*

¹ “In the New Testament, when Christ is represented as sitting at the right hand of Divine Majesty, Heb. i. 3; or at the right hand of God, [Acts ii. 33, and] Heb. x. 12; or at the right hand of the throne of God, Heb. xii. 2; participation in supreme dominion is most clearly meant. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 22; Rom. viii. 34; Mark xvi. 19; Phil. ii. 6—11; Eph. i. 20—23. At the same time, the comparison of these passages will show most clearly that Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God means His being seated on the

mediatorial throne as the result and reward of His sufferings (see particularly Phil. ii. 6—11, and compare Heb. xii. 2); and that the phrase in question never means the *original* dominion which Christ as Logos or God possesses. The sacred writers never speak respecting the Logos, considered simply in His *Divine* nature, as being seated at the right hand of God; but only of the Logos *incarnate*, or the Mediator, as being seated there. So, in Heb. i. 3, it is *after* the expiation made by the Son of God that He is represented as seating Himself at the right hand of the Divine Majesty. And that this *mediatorial* dominion is not to be considered simply as the dominion of the Divine nature of Christ as such is plain from the fact, that, when the mediatorial office is fulfilled, the kingdom of the Mediator as such is to cease. 1 Cor. xv. 23—28. Moreover that the phrase *to sit* at the right hand of God, does not of itself mean

He saith shed forth this, the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, in the form of fire, which ye have seen, and the gift of tongues, which ye all hear; that which ye have seen in the descent of the tongues of fire resting on the head of the Apostles, and the glory which irradiates the countenances of these His messengers, and which ye hear, in the tongues, and in the grace and wisdom and boldness with which the ignorant and unlearned, and so lately timid, disciples make known the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, truths which ye see with the mind, and hear in the words of men inspired by the Spirit.

Baxter.

Acts vi. 15.

Salmeron.

Lorinus.

And in speaking of the Holy Spirit as *the promise of the Father*, and as *shed forth*, the Apostle at once declares the greatness of the gift, and the lavishness with which God had given it to men. He had given not in measure, but had poured it out and *shed it forth* abundantly upon them.

Gorranus.

(34) *For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,*¹

Ps. cx. 1.

Matt. xxii. 44.

1 Cor. xv. 25.

Eph. i. 20.

Heb. i. 13.

The dilemma which St. Peter presents to his hearers is this. The Prophet David in this place is either speaking of himself, or confessedly of the Messiah; but he is not speaking of himself, for *his sepulchre is with us*, he is yet in the tomb, and has *not ascended into the heavens*, therefore it must be of the Messiah that he is here speaking. As the Apostle here appeals to the hundred and tenth Psalm, it is evident that at that time this was recognized by the Jews as a prophecy of Christ.

Bengel.

Cook.

The Lord said unto my Lord—unto Christ, who, though according to the flesh David's son, was, according to His Divine nature, David's Lord. But not only so, Christ was David's Lord in respect to His human nature. For though He was very man, He was, in His incarnate nature, Lord of all creation by right and title of the Redemption which

original divine dominion, is clear from the fact, that Christ assures His faithful disciples they shall sit down with Him on His throne, even as He sat down with the Father on His throne, Rev. iii. 21. It is exaltation, then, in consequence of obedience and sufferings, which is designated by the phrase in question."—*Stuart on the Hebrews*, excursus iv. See *Pearson on the Creed*, art. VI.

Pater Filio *sede à dextris meis*, id est in bonis potioribus secundum naturam assumptam, ita quod omni sis creaturæ prælatus, plenariè glorificatus et divinitate præcunctis abundantius fruens. Istud dixit Christo homini Deus Pater in Ascensione. Secundum divinitatem verò Pater ab æterno dixit Filio, *sede à dextris*, id est, mihi esto æqualis et in ea reside majestate qua Ego."—*Dion. Carthusianus*.

¹ *Dixit Dominus Domino meo*, id est,

He wrought, and by the hypostatic union of man with God, in which He exceeded all men and all angels, Lord of all mankind, and therefore Lord of David. To Him, on His ascension in triumph into heaven, *the Lord*, the Father, said . . . *Sit Thou on my right hand. Sit on my right hand* by reigning with Me; *sit* in rest after the work of redemption which Thou hast accomplished, and after the sufferings on the cross which Thou hast endured; *sit*, that Thou mayst judge the people. Then mayst Thou reverse the humiliation which Thou hast suffered in the flesh: the ignominy which Thou enduredst on the cross and by standing to be judged before the tribunals of earth. *Sit Thou on my right hand.*¹

Corn. & Lap.

Salmeron.

The phrase *the right hand* imports—

(1) The unspeakable felicity into which Christ's human nature—for it is of Christ as Incarnate that this is said—and as the reward of His human sufferings—had now entered, *for in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

1's. xvi. 11.

(2) The glorious majesty to which He had reached. Thus God's right hand is spoken of as *the right hand of the Majesty on high*; and Christ is said elsewhere to be an *High Priest, who is set down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*

Heb. i. 3.

Heb. viii. 1.

(3) That fulness of power with which He is invested who has declared that *all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* The greatness of this power is signified by the *strength of His right hand. Strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand*; and Christ Himself used the same words when He said, *Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power.*

Matt. xxviii.
18.Ps. xx. 6.
1's. lxxxix.
13.Matt. xxvi.
64.

(4) Because judges sit on thrones to execute judgment, and He has now become the judge of all mankind, therefore is this sitting down connected with the right to judge the world. *To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living . . . for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.*

Whitby.

Rom. xiv. 9,
10.

(35) *Until I make thy foes thy footstool.*

Footstool implies complete subjection, whether it be

¹ "*Sede à dextris meis.* Mecum regnando et quiescendo et potestatem judicandi accipiendo post crucis ignominiam et labores et postquam omnium impietate judicatus es ad mortem. Et ait, *à dextris*, id est, secundus post

me ut homo es, et in cœlo ubi dicitur esse Deus: vel in potissimis et celsissimis glorie bonis in quantum homo et in æqualitate majestatis per omnia in quantum Deus."—*Salmeron.*

servile or willing subjection. Those who resist shall yet become subject, and bring about His will, even though they know not the joy of sonship and the delight which comes from ready obedience. Those who yield to His call, and turn to Him as their Lord and God, will also be subject, but with that subjection which is truest freedom. Satan will be cast beneath His feet, and beneath His feet will also be the Magdalen, happy in this, that being once an enemy, and far off from Him by reason of her sins, she has been brought nigh to her Lord by the bonds of penitential love, and has been privileged to bathe those feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head.

Lorinus.

Corn. & Lap.

Until—Sit with me even whilst Thine enemies rage against Thy rule, *sit* until Thine enemies have become Thy footstool, and therefore much the more then. The words mean not *sit until* then, but only until that time, but sit, Thou at rest, even now whilst Thine enemies are still swelling against Thee. This is in accordance with so many passages in the Old and New Testament. Thus, *Lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world*, does not mean that He will be separated from His people then, but that He is with them even now. So again, *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine*, does not mean that those duties of the episcopate were to be neglected after St. Paul had joined his son in the faith.¹

Lorinus.

Matt. xxviii.
20.

1 Tim. iv. 13.

(36) *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Acts v. 31.

In these words does St. Peter sum up his whole argument. He who was Jesus of Nazareth has now ascended unto the heavens: He who was indeed a *man*, though a man approved by God the Father *by wonders, and miracles, and signs*, is the Messiah of whom David spake of old. He who had not where to lay His head, is now received into the heavens, and is *both Lord and Christ*. This Saviour, predicted aforetime by the sure word of prophecy, you have *crucified*. Having shown His majesty; having proved Him, by arguments and citations which they accepted, to be the

¹ “*τὸ, donec*, non significat, quod osque dumtaxat sessurus sit Christus ad dexteram Dei quasi deinceps non sit sessurus et regnaturus; sed potius contrarium, q. d. *Sede et regna apud me donec* omnes hostes tibi subjiciam, quando longè magis sedebis et regnabis, nam non tantum apud me, sed toto

orbe dominaberis; quia omnes hostes tibi subjugabo. Simile est Matt. i. 25, *Non cognoscebat eam donec peperit filium suum*, q. d. B. Virgo non concepit ex Josepho quia non cognovit eam usque ad partum; multo minus cognovit eam post partum.”—Corn. & Lapide.

Messiah, the Apostle pierces their hearts with this charge.¹ He who was and is all this, ye have not received, but have rejected and have crucified.

Corn. à Lap.

*God hath made that same Jesus, the God-man, to be both Lord and Christ. He made Him Christ when He anointed Him with the Spirit without measure: He made Him Lord of mankind by right of the redemption which He purchased by the taking to Himself our nature, and suffering in our flesh. As God, He was always Lord; as man, He was not Christ; but when He was both God and man, then was He both Lord and Christ.*²

Estius.

Lorinus.

Zech. xii. 10.
Luke iii. 10.
Acts ix. 6;
xvi. 39.

(37) *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

In this effect of St. Peter's speech we may see what great things are done by gentle means. Gentleness pricks deeper than violence can. It inflicts a keener wound. For this end it was that St. Peter spake with such tenderness to those who had put the Saviour to death. He mollifies their spirit, that he may the more surely wound with that wound which must precede repentance.³

Chrysostom.

Rom. x. 17.

Sier.

Ecc. xii. 11.

Heb. iv. 12.

When they heard this—This is the road to faith, for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing, in the sense of Holy Scripture, means obedience. They were pricked in their hearts—for the words of the wise are as goads, and the word of the Lord is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. Those who had so lately clamoured for their Lord's death

¹ "Habet Christianus concionator quem concionando imitetur, docendi libertatem moderatione atque prudentia sic temperans, ut veritatis aculeos infigat, tamen non offendant: proferat in medium non fabulas non res à se exogitatas, non fucatam orationem, sed tanquam scriba doctus de thesauro sacrarum scripturarum nova et vetera testimonia [Matt. xiii. 52], quibus divina mysteria confirmet, populo annunciet scelera eorum [Esa. lviii. 1] tandem illud contendat, omnes adducere ad Christum."—Lorinus.

² "Cyrillus Alexandrinus tractans quoque præsentem locum, docet Christum factum Dominum à Patre ratione Humanitatis quo modo etiam posset

dei factus Deus, quia id factum est per Incarnationem, ut ille homo Jesus sit Deus seu ut cum humanitate jungatur divinitas et sit eadem utriusque persona, et ut sit Dominus ille idem qui homo: non per participationem et gratiam, sed per unionem verbi et carnis."—Lorinus.

³ "Quatre conditions d'une véritable conversion. 1. S'instruire des vérités de l'Evangile en lisant ou en écoutant la parole de Dieu. 2. Avoir la cœur touché et pénétré. 3. S'adresser à son pasteur, ou à ceux qui tiennent sa place. 4. S'abandonner à leur conduite avec la soumission d'un enfant et la confiance d'un frère."—Quesnel.

were themselves pierced, as if the spear which pierced His sides, and the nails which were driven through His hands and feet, were turned back, and had pierced the hearts of those who had so lately cried, *Crucify Him*. They were conscious that they had said He was a Samaritan, and had a devil, and had terrified Pilate into giving sentence against one whom he knew to be innocent, by saying, *if thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend*, and had clamoured for His death, calling out, *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*. They recognized now also the words and meaning of the Prophets. Here we have the first steps towards salvation in the consciousness of sin and the fear of deserved punishment. In this agrees both the teaching of the Baptist and that of Christ. Repentance is first required, and then the acceptance of the way of salvation. *Repent ye. . Prepare ye the way of the Lord*.¹

Stier.

John viii. 48.

John xix. 12.
Hofmeister.Matt. iii. 2, 3.
Ferus.

These men, let us note, were *pricked in their heart*, not at the sight of the signs and wonders wrought by the Apostles; not at the hearing of the diverse tongues spoken by men unlearned; but by the preaching of Peter. Signs and marvels did but prepare their hearts to receive the word, and the word when received opened their hearts to confess their sins.²

Calvin.

Men and brethren—It is no longer, these men are drunken with new wine. Those who had before mocked now address the Apostles as *brethren*, using the same word with which the Apostle had saluted them, and their cry is, *what shall we do?* Though conscious of their great sin, in killing the Lord of life, they do not despair as Cain or as Judas did, but they turn for pardon to Him who can pardon, and they ask to be guided into the way of life. That His murderers did not despair, that they did not merely give way to grief on account of their sin, is the answer to Christ's first prayer on the cross. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. That in their penitence they turned to Him is an instance of the meaning of Christ's words, *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me?* and again, *When ye have lifted up the Son*

Fromond.

Ferus.

Luke xxiii.
34.
Fromond.

John xli. 32.

¹ "Hoc est præcipuum pastoris officium ut confracta consolidet, infirma sanet et ut cum mansuetudine recipiat peccatores à viis suis pessimis, hoc est, à vitiis revertentes et resipiscere cupientes: nec quenquam ob peccatorum fœditatem rejiciat, quemadmodum de Christo dicitur, Tanquam pastor gregem suum pascet et in sinu

suo levabit agnos, id est, imperfectos, fœtos ipse portabit [Esa. xl. 11]. Id etiam Petrus hîc facit, neque id gravatum: non enim differt, nec victimas præscribit, sed simpliciter viam salutis monstrat."—*Ferus*.

² "Non sufficit miracula nisi Deus gratia sua interius præveniente, corda convertat."—*Fromond*.

John viii. 28. *of Man, then shall ye know that I am He.* They had lifted Him up, upon the cross, and now convinced of the truth of His mission from the application of the prophecies respecting Him, they ask of the Apostles to be guided to do that which the Crucified required of them.

Dion. Carth. How brightly does His mercy shine forth in this! How abundant His love to mankind we may gather from the mercy shown to those who had rejected and slain Him. He condescended to move the hearts of His murderers to repent, and then accepted them on their repentance. None can doubt as to Christ's readiness to forgive all sins after this instance of His readiness to forgive His murderers.

Luke xxiv. 47. Acts iii. 19. (38) *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

St. Peter turns to all and addresses *every one*; as all had been in one way or another guilty of His death, most of them by clamouring for it, some by consenting to it, he tells them that all needed to *repent*. Neither Pharisee nor publican, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, are passed over in the Gospel invitation, and to all adults repentance and baptism are necessary for their admission into the Church of Christ and a state of salvation;¹ to all it may be said, *except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish*. But though the call is to all, yet is it a personal one, each must repent for himself, each be baptized *for the remission of his own sins*, each be obedient to the law of Christ, if he would continue among His true and loving members.

Gerranus. *Repent.* By this word the Apostle called upon the people of Jerusalem, as the Church still calls on every sinner, to begin the work of conversion to God by sorrow and detestation of past sin, coupled with a firm resolution of abstaining from sin for the future. This penitential sorrow, united with firm faith in God and hope in His promises, is the beginning of that love to God as the source of all righteousness, which is required in every adult who would rightly receive Christian baptism. *Be baptized.* The

Lienard.

¹ "Nullus hominum, qui sunt arbitri sue voluntatis, transit ad Christum, ut incipiat esse, quod non erat, nisi eum poeniteat fuisse quod erat. Et hæc est prima poenitentia, quam Apostolus Petrus hic præcepit Judæis, ait August-

inus homil. 150. Modus autem, quo prima hæc poenitentia à timore per spem ad amorem saltem imperfectum et deinde ad peccati ex tali amore detestationem prosequitur, describitur à Tridentino, Sess. 6, cap. 6."—*Fromond*.

Apostle speaks of this without explanation, as of something which was known to all who heard him. Baptism was in use amongst the Jews on the reception of a proselyte, the Baptist had commenced his mission by baptizing those who came in penitence to his preaching, and the Apostles of Christ received converts by the same rite. And this baptism was administered *in the name of Jesus Christ*, that is, with that baptism which Christ himself enjoined, and in the mode which He prescribed,¹ when He commanded His Apostles, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In the name of Jesus Christ*, not in that of John the Baptist; with that baptism which required then, as now, a special faith in the Incarnate Saviour, and an acknowledgment that He who was crucified was yet both God and Lord. By these words then, *in the name of Jesus Christ*, St. Peter does not state or prescribe any particular form of baptismal words, but only that those who had crucified Him, and were now repentant, should make confession that He who had so suffered was the Messiah.² In Holy Scripture this word, *in the name*, signifies—

(1) To come from and to perform the duty of an ambassador for any one. Thus for instance we read, *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. And again, The Comforter, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* He was promised to the Church, the representative of Christ, to confirm the faith given by Christ.

(2) In the merits and for the sake of another, as, *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.*

(3) In the virtue and power given by another, as when the disciples cast out devils in the name or power of Christ. Thus the rulers and elders and scribes demand of Peter and John *By what power, or by what name, have ye raised the impotent man?* and Peter makes answer, that they had done it *by the name of Jesus of Nazareth*, that is, by His power. And the same use of these words occurs in the Psalms: *Through Thee will we overthrow our enemies, and in Thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*

John iii. 26.
John iii. 22;
iv. 2.

Bengel.

Salmeron.

Matt. xxviii.
19.
Lienard.
Sa.

Hardouin.

Fromond.

John v. 43.

John xiv. 26.

John xvi. 23.

Acts iv. 7, 10.

Psal. xliv. 6.

¹ "Non baptismo Joannis sed Christi, qui confertur invocatione Trinitatis, dicendo: Ego te baptizo in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti."—*Meno-*
chius.

² "Adde fortasse Apostolos primis

illis temporibus, formæ baptismi addidisse nomen Jesu Christi dicendo: Ego te baptizo in nomine Patris et filii Jesu Christi et Spiritus Sancti, ut huic novo nomini fidem, amorem et reverentiam conciliarent."—*Corn. d Lapide.*

(4) Name is often used for person, as, *The name of the God of Jacob defend thee*, that is, God Himself be thy defence.

It cannot then be meant by these words that the Apostles, so shortly after the injunction of Christ to baptize *all converts in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, should have adopted another form of words than that so commanded, but only that they required of those who were baptized a confession of faith in Christ, of reliance on Christ, and trust in His meritorious sacrifice.¹

And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Some have understood this to promise all the newly baptized; the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as the power of healing, and of speaking with tongues; but this can hardly be what is meant, since the same promise is made to *them that are afar off* also, to the Gentiles of that and of all future time. Again, it is clear that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were not poured upon all, and hence the Apostle asks, *are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gift of healing? do all speak with tongues?* Be this as it may, the promise here is confessedly of that sanctifying grace which is given in baptism; and as it seems, also, the *Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord*, which is imparted at confirmation.² This gift followed immediately upon baptism in the case of adults, as most of these converts were. In this was doubtless given that supernatural confirmation of the faith of the believers, to strengthen them in their Christian walk, and enable them to stand unmoved amidst persecution, as well as those gifts of sanctification, which enabled them to walk uprightly in the midst of the evil around.³

Psal. xx. 1.

Sanchez.

Ferus.

Dion. Carth.

1 Cor. xii. 29,
30. Whitby.Isaiah xl. 2.
Fromond.
Lienard.

Sanchez.

Hammond.

Lienard.

¹ "Sensus est, catechumenos ante baptismum et nosse et profiteri debere ea, quæ de nomine Christi, h.e. persona, officiis, statibus Christi, beneficiis ab eodem partis, cognita esse debent illis, qui Christi sacris sint imitandi. Ejusmodi vero professionem ante baptismum ab adultis requisitam fuisse, patet ex Actor. xxii. 18, ubi Christus Paulum jubet baptismum recipere *invocato ante nomine Domini*. Atque hanc consuetudinem observavit Philippus, Æthiopem illum, Act. viii. 27, memoratum baptizaturus."—*Wolfius*.

² "*Obj.* Ex hoc videtur quod remissio peccatorum præcedat infusionem

gratiæ. *Resp.* Spiritus Sanctus vel infusio gratiæ præcedit remissionem peccatorum sed secundum quod datur ad robur, sequitur eam. Et de hoc loquitur hîc."—*Hugo de S. Charo*.

³ "The Spirit first enters as *wind* and *fire*, afterwards cleansea as *water*, and then becomes as *oil* with honey. These are His four symbols. The order of succession is—baptism, remission, Holy Spirit. But should it not be reversed? As regards its germ and origin, yes; for the Holy Ghost first effects the opening and penetration of the heart; then ensues the desire, the hope, and comfort of a remission of

(39) *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

Joel ii. 28.
Acts iii. 25;
x. 45; xi. 15,
18; xiv. 27;
xv. 8, 8, 14.
Eph. ii. 13,
17.

For the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit made by Joel is *unto you and to your children, and to all the Gentiles who are afar off*, by ignorance of the truth, and by unholiness of life; but who yet shall be brought nigh and be made members of the fold of Christ. This was the very object of Christ's death, which was not for the Jews only, but that also *He should gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad*; and not of His death only, but also of His teaching, since *He came and preached peace to them which were afar off, and to them that are nigh*, to the Jew and to the Gentile alike;¹ to those near in time and those afar off in distant ages. This was a phrase well known to the Jews; and among the Rabbins, *those that are afar off* meant the heathen. Lest any should neglect the offer of salvation from the remembrance of the greatness of their sins, or the sense of their unworthiness, St. Peter declares that the glorious promise made by the mouth of Joel, was to them and to their *children* also. St. Peter constantly dwells upon the largeness of the promise, it was not limited to one family, but extended to the whole Gentile nations; and yet with this he reminds them that it is not of man's merits, but of God's mercy, that salvation and admission into God's Church comes. It is not man that seeks the gift, it is God that *shall call*.

Lorinus.
Dion. Carth.
John xi. 52.
Eph. ii. 17.
Wesley.
Schoettg.
Hor. Heb. i.
p. 761.

Some have objected to this, that St. Peter did not himself contemplate the calling in of the Gentiles to the fold of Christ. This, however, is not correct. Every speech of St. Peter and of the rest of the Apostles testifies to their knowledge that the Gentile was to be made partaker with the Jew in all the benefits of the life and death of Christ. What St. Peter did not then understand was this, that the Gentile was to share with the Jew without being compelled to be circumcised and accept the ceremonial law, and thus pass through Judaism into Christianity.

Ferus.
Hofmeister.
Hugo de S.
Charo.
Bengel.
Olshausen.

(40) *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

It is evident from these words that St. Luke is giving us

sins; and not until then can the sacrament of renewal attest and perfect what has been done."—*Stier*.

¹ "Et omnibus qui longè sunt. A Deo, Ecclesia, fide, et salute, hoc est gentilibus."—*Menochius*.

not the whole discourse of St. Peter, but only the heads or outlines of his speech.

Ferus.

Lienard.

Salmeron.
Eph. iv. 22—
24.

Quesnel.

Save yourselves—separate yourselves from the pollutions of this evil world, be not conformed to its evil practices, cast off the old man, or the leaven of malice and wickedness, *and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and . . . put on the new man.* He who would serve God must fly from companionship with those who tempt, and from the world which would corrupt the law of Christ.

Phil. ii. 15.
Deut. xxxii
20.

Dion. Carth.

He calls the world at large, but more especially the nation of the Jews, this untoward generation, or, as St. Paul says, using the same word (*σκολιάς*), *a crooked and perverse nation*; or, as in the Old Testament, *a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.*¹ This unbelieving generation, which has rejected Christ, and crucified Him, and slain the prophets of God, and yet will not repent of these sins.

(41) *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Lorinus.

Gladly—the effect of the word preached by St. Peter was to fill the heart with joy. In this word we have the freedom of man's will pointed out. Those who received did it not from compulsion, but willingly and with gladness of heart. All did not receive the *word*; as in our Lord's parable, scarce a fourth part of the seed springs up, and bears fruit, and brings it to perfection. Many hear the word of God, few comparatively hear it to the conversion of the soul from sin, and to perseverance in holiness. The *word* here spoken, had the same fortune as the seed sown by the Sower, some fell by the wayside, some on stony ground, some among thorns, and other on good ground.

Ferus.

The same day there were added unto the small band of the disciples *about three thousand souls.*² The first-fruits of the harvest was directed to be offered up to God at the feast of Pentecost. Now, on the descent of the Holy Ghost, at this same feast, not a handful of corn, but the first-fruits of the harvest of souls were offered up, and consecrated to God. It was the first casting forth of the Gospel net, and lo how great the number of those enclosed in it!

Gorranus.

Hofmeister.

The large number of those baptized on this occasion, to-

¹ The words of the Hebrew רַב־הָעָם are rendered in the Septuagint version γενεά σκολιά καὶ δεισ-
πραμμένη.

² "Recte ergo, in die illa, id est, in

Pentecoste, colligitur messis ista spiritalis quæ prædicatione, sudore et sanguine Christi per ipsos tres annos coaluit ut annis singulis mille respondeant."—*Lorinus*.

wards the close of the day of Pentecost, independent of other reasons, renders it hardly possible that they should have been baptized by immersion.¹ Lorinus.

(42) *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* Acts i. 14.
Rom. xii. 12.
Eph. vi. 18.
Col. iv. 2.
Heb. x. 25.

They continued steadfastly. In this is noted—

(1) The assiduity or perseverance of the new converts in listening to the teaching—the *doctrine*—of the Apostles. Sanchez.

(2) They frequently heard, and the more they heard with their ears and received of spiritual truth into the heart, the more eager were they to hear.

(3) What they heard they obeyed, making the teaching of the Apostles the rule of their lives. Ferus.

Perseverance in hearing and in meditating on God's word, is necessary to the spiritual life of the Christian no less than the sword is necessary to the soldier, the plough to the husbandman, the hammer to the smith, or bread to the nourishment of the human body.² Lorinus.

Four things are here to be noted about the conversation of these first Christians—

(1) Their perseverance in hearing and in obeying the teaching of the Apostles.

(2) Their ready communication to the poor converts who needed alms.

(3) Their reception of the Holy Eucharist.

(4) Their meeting together for united prayer, in which is included the whole body of Christian worship—thanksgiving and supplication and prayers.³ Salmeron.

The whole edifice of Christianity is founded on the faith received by apostolic teaching; reared on the hope and confidence which comes from communion with God in prayer; and is perfected by that love of which the Eucharist

¹ "*Baptizati sunt non à Petro solo, sed ab aliis apostolis et discipulis qui Petro concionanti assistebant. Quia verò tam multi simul baptizati sunt, D. Thormas, 3 parte, quæst. 66, art. 7, putat baptizatos fuisse non per modum immersionis ut communior usus, inquit, sed per modum aspersionis vel effusionis.*"—*Fromond.*

² "*Erant quotidie perseverantes Primò, in doctrina Apostolorum, audienda, meditanda, executioni mandanda; Secundò, in communicatione fractionis*

panis, putà Eucharistici ut Syrus vertit, et etiam Tremellius, Chemnitius, Osiander: et est communis Patrum expositio."—*Tirinus.*

³ "Being thus convinced, converted, and sacramentally bound and devoted to Christ, they continued united in communion with the Apostles, in learning their doctrine, and in brotherly communication, and love, and in celebration of the Lord's Supper, and in conjunct prayer. The Apostles conducting the society in all this."—*Baxter.*

Quesnel. is the cement and pledge. *The Apostles' doctrine* comprehended the interpretation of the Old Testament, accommodated to the mystery of the new law of Christ. By *fellowship*, we may understand union with the Apostles in outward worship, as well as the communication of goods to those who needed. In this, however, the poor alone could be recipients. The first meaning seems most agreeable to the whole passage.

In breaking of bread. This is a common form of expressing an ordinary meal, and if it stood alone might as fittingly refer to a common meal as to the Eucharist. Standing, however, as it does in the enumeration of religious observances, the attendance on the teaching of the Apostles and in prayer, it can hardly mean that they continued *steadfastly* to break bread in their common meal. Here, or at the forty-sixth verse, it must refer to the Eucharistic feast.¹

Mark xvi. 17. (43) *And fear came upon every soul: and many*
Acts iv. 33; wonders and signs were done by the apostles.²
v. 12.

Chrysostom. *Fear came upon every soul*, as well those who received the word as those who rejected it.

(1) A solemn reverential fear on all those who believed and were baptized, joined with obedience to the teaching of the Apostles.³

(2) Terror and dread on those who turned from the truth preached by them,—a fact which must have arrested for a time the hand of persecution.

In this was God's power evidenced. Before the outpouring of the Spirit, the Apostles were timid and shrank from confessing Christ, whilst the enemies of Christ were bold in persecution. Now that the Spirit had been given, the Apostles are bold in the assertion of the truth, and in their declaration that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; whilst those who before made them fear, now trembled before the Apostles, and *fear came upon them* at the words, and at the *signs and wonders which were done by them*.⁴ The sanctity which marks the lives, and the mightiness of the truths which come from the lips, of the minis-

¹ The Syriac version reads "in the breaking of the Eucharist."

² διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων—not ἐκ τῶν ἀποστόλων—it was not the Apostles that did the *signs and wonders*, but the *signs and wonders* were done by God through—διὰ—that is, by the hands of the Apostles.

³ "Timor Domini, Religio in Deum. Luc. i. 65."—Joan. Michaelis.

⁴ "ἐγένετο—ἐγένετο. Mark the difference of sense. Fear was inspired into the hearts of the multitude *once for all*, and remained there: signs and wonders were being wrought *often* by the Apostles."—Wordsworth.

ters of God prepare men's hearts to receive Him; whilst the same *signs* and teaching terrify sinners, on account of their evil lives, though often they have no other effect than to make them *fear*. Quesnel.

(44) *And all that believed were together, and had all things common;* Acts iv. 32, 34.

All that believed were together, in inward affection and in outward concord, no longer scattered one from another, no longer hiding from the enemies of the faith.¹ *And had all things common*. This means not that they had no longer any distinct property, but that they dealt it out freely to all who needed it. If it implies in any way a community of goods amongst the first converts at Jerusalem, this is a condition of things which could have only existed a short time. We soon read of the poor of this city, and of the contributions made by distant churches to supply their needs. It can but mean that they regarded their goods and possessions as the common property of all, and to be divided to every one as they needed,² as this verse is explained soon after: *the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed were his own; but they had all things common*. Dion. Carth. Tirinus. Whitby. 1 Cor. xvi. 1-3. Rosenmüller. Hofmeister. Acts iv. 32.

The fuller these first converts were of spiritual life, the less they regarded the goods and possessions of earth. Dion. Carth.

(45) *And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*³ Is. lviii. 7.

They sold their possessions. They had found the true treasure hid in the field, and, like the man in the parable, they *sold their possessions* to obtain and keep it. *And parted them to all men*, not to friends only, but to all the members of Christ's Church, *as every man had need*, not Ferus.

¹ "En quanta vis Spiritus Sancti! Antea timidi quasi cervi, nunc omnibus terrori sunt quasi leones."—*Tirinus*.

² "Ex verbis Lucæ, si modò ritè expendas, apparet ac planè liquet, quod communio ista nihil aliud fuerit, quam voluntaria communicatio sive divisio. Nam vendebant ait, ergo propria erant quæ vendebant, Quis enim probus aliena vendiderit. Dividebant præterea: ergo rerum domini erant nec

ita communes erant opes ut quisque quod liberet, raperet."—*Hofmeister*. See a dissertation 'de vera natura communionis bonorum in Ecc. Hierosoly.' in Mosheim's *Dissertationes ad Hist. Ecc. Pertinentes*, vol. ii.

³ "In nobis sic unanimitas diminuta est ut et largitas operationis infracta sit."—*Ait Augustinus*. Fracta largitas unanimitem fregit et unanimitas diminuta diminuit largitatem."—*Novarinus*.

recklessly, but with care and prudence in their distribution. Lavish, yet not wasteful. They were not as some of the heathen philosophers of old, who cast into the sea or threw away their riches. They husbanded them, using them to God's service. It is Satan who teaches us to disparage the good things of God, and to abuse His bounties by not using them, and by not remembering that we are His stewards.

Chrysostom.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Quesnel.

By *possessions*, seems to be meant landed property, farms, or estates; by *goods*, moveables, or chattels. These they distributed; parting from the goods of earth; and thereby laying up treasure in heaven.¹

Luke xxiv.

53.
Acts i. 14; v.
42; xx. 7.

(46) *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

Olshausen.

Chrysostom.

Fromond.
Bengel.

Stier.

There are two interpretations of *καρ' οἶκον*, either of which is equal in authority to the other. *From house to house* is as good a rendering as *at his house*, or *at home*. The former translation, however, is less likely to be the meaning, since *καρ' οἶκον* seems placed in opposition to, or contrast with, the temple.² They attended daily *with one accord in the temple* for divine worship. Their love feast, their common meal, was *in the house*, which some interpret to mean within the bounds of the temple, the house of God. This, however, is inherently unlikely. No such apartment could be occupied without the consent or connivance of the priests and rulers of the people. Some simply render these words *at home*, or again *in each house*, as though by turns. Their numbers, however, already forbid them from taking a common meal in one house, as one could scarcely be found large enough for this purpose in the city.

Breaking bread. This is the same phrase just before used. It is hardly likely, therefore, that it can refer to the same thing, and probably means the common bread dealt out

¹ "O verè Christianam vitam, quid obsecro deesse potuit, ubi singuli in commune conferebant quod habebant? Quo modo invidia potuit habere locum, ubi qui plus habebant non sibi quicquam retinentes ultro aliis communicabant? Sed nec lites et contentiones locum habuere ubi communia erant omnia: contrarium in nobis experimur."—*Ferus*.

² "*καρ' οἶκον*, at home, or in the

house or room to which they habitually resorted for worship. At home. So our English margin and the Syriac, and so Bengel, Meyer, and Alford. For this use of *καρ' οἶκον*, see Rom. xvi. 5; Philem. 2; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; *Clem. Rom.* i. 1.; *Mart. Ignat.* 7. There is a contrast between the public worship in the temple, and the religious offices of Christian assemblies at home."—*Wordsworth*.

by the richer Christians to their poorer brethren, of whom at this time there would be a large number at Jerusalem. The best commentators understand by *bread* here, the ordinary food of the worshippers;¹ others, however, take *bread* to refer to the Eucharistic bread, whilst *meat* means the ordinary meal. Again, by *breaking bread from house to house*, there may be a reference to the abundant charity of the new converts, who, not content to open their houses to their poorer brethren, sought them out and brought food to them, going on this errand *from house to house*.²

Mariana.
Salmeron.

Sanchez.
Baumgarten.

Novarinus.

Breaking bread. On their return from worship in, the temple they *did eat their meat with gladness*, with spiritual joy, and *singleness of heart*, with modesty in their giving to others, with frugality in what they partook of themselves; without dissimulation, envy, or repining at the fortune of others. Some understand by *singleness of heart* that which St. Paul expresses by *simplicity*—*Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity . . . we have had our conversation in the world*.³

Dion. Carth.
Euthymius.

Lyra.

Rom. xii. 8.

2 Cor. i. 12.
Grotius.

Simplicity should mark the Christian in the midst of abundance, and content in the midst of poverty.

Quesnel.

(47) *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

Luke ii. 52.
Acts iv. 33;
v. 14; xi.
24.
Rom. xiv. 18.

Having favour, because of their bounty to the poor, because of their love one towards another, for they were in all things of *one accord*, and because of the purity of their lives, for the favour spoken of is that which they had *with all the people*, as their teaching and charity extended to all men.⁴

Sanchez.

Heinrich.
Hammond.

¹ "*Frangentes panem circa domos, panis ponitur sine articulo, secus superius, ubi dixit illos perseverare in doctrina Apostolorum et communicatione et fractione panis et orationibus, ubi ex articulo præfixo et adjunctis, sermo est de pane sacrosanctæ Eucharistæ. Chryso. etiam et Beda non agnoscunt in his postremis verbis Eucharistiam sed communes cibos.*"—*Salmeron*.

² "Circa domos inquit, non intra domos: quorum scilicet vestigia non sequuntur, qui pransuri pessulos ac repagula foribus clausis obijciunt, vectes seris innectunt: sicque se contra pau-

peres tamquam adversus circumfusas hostium acies in obsidione præmuniunt."—*P. Damian. de Eleemosyna*, cap. iv.

³ "ἀφελότητι καρδίας—corde puro, Rom. xii. 8, vel simplicitate animi. Qui nempe dabant, libenter dabant, et qui alebantur, pio et grato animo accipiebant beneficia."—*Rosenmüller*.

⁴ "ἐχαίρειν signifies *to use*, or *to exercise*, as when Christ saith, *to him that hath shall be given*, and, *let us have grace*, Heb. xii. 28. And as for χάρις, that is the very word *charity*, and is by Cicero so rendered, and frequently signifies liberality, and so is used, 2 Cor.

In this we may note the boldness of the Apostles and first converts; they met daily in the temple for prayer and praise and mutual edification, no man seeking as yet to make them afraid. They had no fear, for the people without had fear, whilst God, by the gift of the Spirit, had strengthened His servants with boldness as well as with gladness of heart.

Leigh. *And the Lord added* those whom He moved to repentance to the number of the faithful, and this He did *daily*, no day without the accession of fresh converts to the faith in Christ.¹ The lives and preaching, the boldness and the good deeds, of the Apostles and first disciples were so many instruments by which the converts were gathered into the Church;² it was *the Lord*, however, who made these means efficacious, and *added to the Church daily* those who were escaping from the flood of ungodliness around, those who were being saved; that is, who were longing to become Christians.³ In this sense St. Paul uses this word, *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

1 Cor. i. 18.

viii. 2, and in Acts iv. 33, where *μεγάλη χάρις* is by the Syriac rendered, great goodness or benignity, and therefore the phrase *ἔχοντες χάριν* is by the Syriac rendered, *they gave alms before all the people.*—Hammond.

¹ “*τοὺς σωζομένους*—those who were in the way of salvation.”—Alford. “Such as were saved or made whole, that is, such as believed.”—Weston in Bowyer.

² In every age of the Church, holiness of life in those who believed has been the great means of extending the Church. When it could be said, *He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost*, then it would surely follow, *and much people were added unto the Lord.* Acts xi. 21.

³ “*Prius est vitia fugere; sequitur addiscere virtutes, quod fit in Ecclesia.*”—Grotius.

CHAPTER III.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

TIBERIUS.
PONTIUS PILATE.
CAIAPHAS.

(1) *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.* Ps. lv. 17.
Acts ii. 46.

THE ninth hour, answering to our three in the afternoon, was the hour of evening sacrifice and of public prayer. This was one of the three stated times of the temple worship.¹ Lightfoot. Some have supposed that this was on the same day, the day of Pentecost, in which the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, though this is unlikely. We find these two Apostles selected by our Blessed Lord to go forth *together*, as when they went to prepare, at His bidding, the last passover which He partook with His disciples. These two went *together* to ascertain the truth of the account brought by Mary Magdalene as to the absence of the body Lorinus.

Luke xxii. 8.

¹ The servants of God under the law were accustomed to keep the hours of nine in the morning, noon, and three in the afternoon, as times of prayer. David says, "In the evening, and morning, and at noon-day, will I pray, and that instantly."—Ps. lv. 18. Daniel in his captivity at Babylon observed the same rule, and "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks to his God."—Dan. vi. 10. As the Jews divided their day into twelve hours, reckoning from sun-rise to sun-set, these hours were of unequal length, according as the days were longer or shorter. The third hour of the day was the middle space

between sun-rise and noon, which, if the sun rose at five o'clock, which it does in one part of the year, then this hour answered to our half-past eight. If, however, the sun did not rise until seven o'clock, as in the shorter days, then "the third hour of the day" was half-past nine. The chief hours of prayer were the third and the ninth hours, the times of the morning and the evening sacrifice. See Exod. xxix. 39; Numb. xxviii. 3, 4; and Acts x. 3, 20. From the earliest periods of the Church of Christ these three hours were observed, and Tertullian [*de Je-juniis*] calls them "insigniores et solenniores in orationibus diurnis,"

John xx. 2. of Christ from the sepulchre, and after the miracle here related *Peter and John* were sent by the rest of the Apostles to Samaria, as soon as they had heard *that Samaria had received the word of God.*

Fromond. These two *went up together*—as Christ sent forth His Apostles two and two at the first. This union of heart and action disposes the soul to receive aright the blessing sought in prayer. They *went up*—the ascent to the temple, which was considerable, became an emblem of that ascent of the heart heavenward which must accompany all true prayer. Only by our ascending above the level of earth and of earthly things can we come into the presence of Him who is Lord of the temple.

Salmeron. They *went up together into the temple*—so long as the temple at Jerusalem remained, the Jewish converts to Christianity still *went up* there to offer their prayers. And as Christ went up daily to the temple when He was at Jerusalem and taught there, so here, amid a multitude of worshippers, did the Apostles, until hindered by persecution, scatter the seed of life. This place was still to them the place and house of prayer. There is a fitness in this—

Sanchez. (1) Prayer in the temple then, as prayer in the church now, is a public confession and invocation of the name of God, and therefore such prayer is a greater honour to Him whom we worship than private prayer can be.

(2) When His worshippers meet together, then has He specially promised to be present.

Corn. & Lap. (3) In the temple, or church, the place of public prayer, the worship of God's people is united, and prayer and supplication is strengthened by the union of the hearts and voices of the worshippers. Public prayer, then, is a greater honour to God, has His sure promise, and is more efficacious as being united prayer.

Wordsworth. The Fathers commonly regard St. Peter as the representative of the active or practical life, whilst in St. John the contemplative life is more strongly evidenced.¹ Both these must go together in the building up of the man of God, and both are needed to the perfection of the Church of Christ.

¹ "From the circumstance that St. John is so often mentioned in combination with St. Peter, up to the time when Peter and John are sent to Samaria to confirm the baptized converts (viii. 14), and that St. John is never afterwards mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, though St. Peter is

mentioned nearly forty times after that occasion; it may perhaps be reasonably inferred that St. John departed from Judæa, perhaps into Asia, not long after that time. St. John is mentioned as present at Jerusalem on the occasion of St. Paul's visit, Gal. ii. 9." —Wordsworth.

(2) *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful,¹ to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;*

John ix. 8.
Acts xiv. 8.

As usual with St. Luke, when he has to single out a miracle from *the wonders and signs* which were done by the Apostles, he relates a miracle of healing, and dwells upon the circumstances attending it. Doubtless, indeed, among the miracles wrought were many of healing; this one, however, it is natural that St. Luke should single out from the rest, because it was done *at the gate of the temple*, and was witnessed by so many, and because of its effect in the large number of converts immediately after added to the Church.

Calvin.

Corn. & Lap.

Acts iv. 4.

The man was not merely *lame from his mother's womb*, his limbs were contracted, so that he required to be *carried* and laid down before the eyes of those who went up to the temple. The character of the place, and the purpose for which men were going up, disposed them to compassion, and led them to stretch forth their hands to administer to his wants.

Lyra.

Fromond.

He was laid at the material gate of the temple, but he was laid before the eyes of Him who is the spiritual door of the fold, and He it was who sent His Apostles, and gave them power to work this miracle, and to raise him from the ground.²

Lange.

¹ In our ignorance as to the topography of Jerusalem and of the temple, it is not possible to determine with absolute certainty which of the many gates of the temple was distinguished by the name of the Beautiful Gate. According to Josephus (de Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 14), 'There were nine of the gates that were overlaid with silver and gold. But one without the temple or sanctuary, made of Corinthian brass, far excelled those of gold or silver.' This gate is supposed to have been the east entrance to the women's court, and was sometimes called the Corinthian Gate, from the material of which it was made. It was also known by the name of Nicanor's Gate. Others, however, suppose the Beautiful Gate to be that called Shushan (שִׁשָּׁן) by the Rabbins, probably from the bas-relief

lily work in brass around the capitals of the columns (1 Kings vii. 19). It is derived from an unused root שִׁשָּׁן, white, hence שִׁשָּׁן, a lily. White and Beautiful being convertible, as in Shushan, Esther i. 2, the white or beautiful city. (as *Beogrady*—*Belgrade*—in Slavonic.) This gate was on the east side of the court of the Gentiles, and close to Solomon's porch.

² "Autrefois les pêcheurs estoient ainsi à la porte des Eglises, s'y jettoient aux pieds des fidèles et briguient leurs suffrages, pour être admis à la grace de la pénitence publique. Il faut au moins aller à la porte du vrai Temple de Dieu qui est Jesus Christ, et y aller perseveramment, avoir recours à la main et à la bourse des autres, c'est à dire, au zèle, aux bonnes œuvres et à la charité du prochain."—*Quesnel*.

(3) *Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.*

Gorranus.

The poor naturally, and at all times, turn for sympathy and help to those whom they see going into the house of God, and expect the greater compassion from those who make open profession of their belief in the God of love and mercy by going up to worship in His house.¹

Calvin.

The lame man did but ask *an alms* of the Apostles. They answered not the words of his prayer, but they did more; they had mercy upon his needs. Thus does God deal with us in giving us more than either we ask or desire of Him, not replying to our words so much as answering and supplying all our needs.

(4) *And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.*

Ferus.

*Look on us.*² In this way does the Apostle excite the desire and raise the expectation of the poor lame man, that so he might be the better prepared to receive the gift which was about to be given him. He says, *on us*, not on me. The miracle was not the work of him who stretched out his hand and raised the lame man. The healing was from Him who was alike the Master of both these Apostles, and from whom all miracles, whether of healing or of protection, come.

Novarinus.

Num. xxi. 8.

As those who were bitten by the fiery serpents were healed when *fastening* their *eyes* upon the serpent of Moses, so does God require of us to fix our eyes upon Him, if we desire His mercy. The cry of the soul conscious of sin and desirous of God's mercy will ever be, *Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, even as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us.* It was when Peter's eye, fixed on his Lord, saw the eye of Christ regarding him, that the remembrance of his sin smote his conscience and moved him to repentance.³

Psal. cxiii.
1, 2.

Salmeron.

¹ "Misericordes fore credidit, qui templum frequentabant. Promptus ad eleemosynas erogandas sit, qui templa frequens adit, ut eleemosynæ largitione non templum tantum intret, sed spirituale templum fiat. Non est dignus intrare templum ille, ad quem, ut ad templum, non intrat misericordia."

—Novarinus.

² "Differunt paululum βλέπειν τινά et βλέπειν εἰς τινά. Posterius liberio-rem intuitum, exprimit qualem ut animi nihil mali sibi conscientis et spei ejusdam ac fiduciæ testem postulassee Petrus videtur."—Kypke.

³ "Quemadmodum Deus quem vult

Let the ministers of Christ lay to heart the lesson here given them. Peter's look of regard worked expectation and confidence in the heart of the lame man. It is the love which we show to our brethren which opens their hearts to receive the truth which we declare, and to acknowledge that we are the ministers of God. Lange.

(5) *And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.* (6) *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.* Acts iv. 10.

It is evident from these words that even if the Apostles assisted in the distribution of the *silver and gold* for which the *possessions and goods* of the disciples had been sold, yet they distributed at once to *every man* as he *had need*, and did not retain any of the alms for future use. When the lame man *asked an alms* of them, they had not to give. They, however, do more than he asks: *Such as I have*, said St. Peter, that is, the power of healing sickness and infirmities by the power of Christ, *give I thee*. He does not say I will give, but I *give* now.¹ The mercies which were entrusted to the Apostles to distribute were given immediately, at the sight of the wants of those who *had need*. An example to all who are stewards of God's bounties not to delay their hand in ministering to the necessities of their poorer brethren. Tirinus.

In the name—that is, in the power—of *Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, by His power whom ye crucified, whom ye despised because he was of Nazareth: by His power who, though man, is yet the Eternal God, *rise up and walk*. Menochius. Peter, in using these words, declares that he is but the instrument, and that the name or virtue by which the lame man was healed, was that of Christ. Thus was fulfilled that which Christ promised to His Apostles when He was about to leave them in bodily presence: *If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.*² Calvin.

miserari, prius intuetur: uti cum dicitur; Respice in me et miserere mei. Ita Petrus, antequam conversus fieret amarè, respectus est à Domino. Dixerunt autem Apostoli, Respice in nos, ut attentus reddatur inspector eorum, quæ pacienda sunt, ne magnitudine postea facti perterrefactus oblivisceretur."—*Salmeron.*

¹ "Hieronymus ad Eustochium de custodia Virginitatis, c. 14. Cum citasset hunc locum, subjunxit: At nunc multi; licet sermone taceant, opere loquuntur: Fidem et misericordiam non habeo, quod autem habeo, argentum et aurum, hoc tibi non do."—*Estius.*

² "The difference in the manner in

Let the suppliant soul lay to heart the lesson of comfort which these words of St. Peter afford, and remember that when God seems to refuse to answer our prayer, He does so only that He may give us greater things and more abundantly than those which we ask.

Lange.

There is another lesson, and that applies to all, for to all has God given good things. We are required to give as God has given to us, and of such gifts as He has placed within our power. If He has given us wealth, then let us give of our *silver and gold* as His stewards: if He has not given us of the wealth of earth, let us, however, stretch forth the hand of sympathy to those who need help: let us console and teach those who want consolation and instruction; and if we cannot do this, yet let us not withhold from them our compassion and our prayers.

Corn. & Lap.

(7) *And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

Col. iv. 14.

St. Luke, the beloved physician, dwells, as he does also in his Gospel, on a miracle of healing, and uses here expressions which are precise and technical. It was the soles of the feet (*βάσεις*) and the ankles (*σφυρά*) which had no power, and both these required strengthening before the lame man could walk.¹

Cook.

Alford.

He took him by the right hand—as Christ so often touched those whom He was about to heal, as though to show by whom the cure was effected, and that men might know that the disease was not expelled, nor the wounded part made whole, by any spontaneous exercise of natural power. And that this healing was miraculous is still further marked by its taking place *immediately*. It was by no slow and

Chrysostom.

which Christ wrought the miracles, and the Apostles performed them, is here observable. The Apostles performed their miracles through Christ, by virtue of His name and authority. It was in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah, that this miracle was performed. They were the mere instruments. He was the efficient agent. Christ, on the other hand, performed His miracles in His own name and by His own authority. He wrought independently. His language was that of omnipotence, theirs was that of faith in Him. He said, 'I say unto you, arise;'

they said, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk.' He was the Messiah, the Son; they were the servants of the household."—*Gloag*.

¹ "Luke implies that all the parts in the lame man were strengthened, so as to enable him to walk. *βάσεις* are the feet, which have their principal strength in the knees: *σφυρά*, by a catechresis, are used to express the ankles, as in Callimachus οὐδὲν ἐπὶ σφυρὸν ὀρθὸν ἀνίστηναι: strictly, little mallets, or the lowest parts of the leg. Luke, as being a physician, expressed himself accurately."—*Bengel*.

gradual process of nature that the lame man was made to walk upright, nor was it by any healing skill on the part of him who *took him by the right hand*—it was by the direct power of God that he was cured. Corn. & Lap.

4. This one man was healed, that all might have assurance of the power and the readiness of Christ to heal all manner of infirmities, as His power healed this lame man, and lifted him on his feet, that those bowed down by sin and conscious of their spiritual infirmities, might lift their hearts to Him who could do so great a miracle. Such outward signs were in truth a testimony to the spiritual truths which the Apostles everywhere declared. The strength which the lame man wondrously received was an evidence of Christ's power over the souls of men. Just as when He healed the paralytic man, and bade him take up his bed and walk, the cure was wrought in attestation of His claim to be able to forgive sin, and for the self-same cause was this power conferred upon the Apostles and the Church. Novarinus.

Precept is good, but to be effectual it must be accompanied by action on the part of the minister of God. He must teach, for thereunto was he sent; but he must also hold out his hand to help the weak, to raise the fallen, and to strengthen that which is *ready to perish*.¹ Bede.
Job xxix. 13.

(8) *And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.* Isa. xxxv. 6.

The greatness of this miracle is shown in this, that he who had been a cripple *from his mother's womb*, and therefore had never learnt to walk, now *stood and walked*; and that he who having been for *forty years* a cripple, and had required daily to be carried by his friends, and to be *laid* by them at the gate of the temple, was now, *immediately* after the Apostle had taken him by the hand, able to stand upright, to walk, and to leap with joy at his wondrous cure.² In this miracle was the prediction of the prophet, at least in its outer meaning, fulfilled, *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart.* Bengel.
Acts iv. 22.
Sanchez.
Isa. xxxv. 6.

In his gratitude for this mercy, the lame man *which was healed* does not immediately go down to his own house, but

¹ "Quem vero erigit, hunc etiam dextera confortat. Quia sermo docentis in corde auditorum minus valet, si non etiam propriæ actionis commendatur exemplis."—*Bede*.

² "Ordo perfectionis egregius, primum illum surgere qui jacuerat, deinde arripere virtutem et sic regni januam cum apostolis intrare."—*Bede*.

enters with the Apostles *into the temple* to render thanks to Him from whom this mercy had come.

Lange.
Acts iv. 16,
21.

(9) *And all the people saw him walking and praising God:* (10) *And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement¹ at that which had happened unto him.*

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Salmeron.

Acts iv. 4.

All the people saw him. The miracle was wrought in the place of greatest resort at this season—the temple: it was done at a time when the largest number of the people were assembled, the time of the evening sacrifice, so that the whole multitude of those gathered together at Jerusalem, from all parts of Judæa and Galilee, and even from more distant places, might see the miracle and recognize in it a sign from heaven, and know in whose name and power it had been done. That they did recognize God's hand and accept the significancy of the miracle as a sign from on high is evidenced in its effects upon the crowds which saw or heard what had been done, they now readily *heard the word and believed*, and *about five thousand* of them were *added to the Church*.

John x. 23.
Acts v. 12.

(11) *And as the lame man which was healed held² Peter and John, all the people run together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.*

Lange.
John x. 23,
31.

Several conjectures have been made as to the reason why this part of the temple was called *Solomon's porch*; the more usual supposition is, that it was one of the covered passages or porticos of the old temple which had survived the destruction of the temple and city when taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Here it was that Christ walked and taught, and here the Jews took up stones to cast at Him.³

¹ "Quod ait *extasi*, maxima intelligitur admiratio, qua quis alienatur quasi à seipso. Et ut ait Aug. Psal. xxx. Verbum *extasis* Græcum est, Latine, quantum datur intelligi verbo uno exponi potest, sidicatur excessus. Excessus autem mentis propriè solet *extasis* dici. In excessu vero mentis duo intelliguntur, aut pavor, aut intentio ad superna, ita ut quodammodo de

memoria labantur inferna. In hac *extasi* fuerunt omnes sancti, quibus arcana Dei mundum istum excedentia revelata sunt."—*Gangaëus*.

² "Κρατεῖν est *tenere*. Retinebat nempe claudus sanatus Apostolos, eis adhærebat, eorum societate diutius frui cupiens, ut jam Theophylactus ex Chrysostomo explicavit."—*Rosenmüller*.

³ This porch or cloister was, accord-

Yet, so unwearied is He in showing mercy, that here He worked this miracle which turned the hearts of so many who had before rejected Him, and here showed forth to His murderers this evidence of His power and goodness. Novarinus.

We have in this miracle a significant picture of the dealings of God with man. The temple of God is His Church on earth, the place in which He is ever present, and of which *the door* and entrance is Christ Himself, God and man.¹ Here are *laid* those who, on account of their powerlessness *from their mother's womb*, the weakness of the flesh, are unable to stand upright and to enter into the presence of God. For long years have they lain at the door, and but for God's mercy would for ever be shut out, hopeless of remedy. When, however, all hope of recovery has died out, God sends His messenger, and the sinner is immediately bidden to stand upright, and has power given him so to do, and is called upon to enter into the temple and to praise God with joyful lips and with a holy life. He who before lies helpless at the gate, is at the gate healed so that he may enter in and dwell there. The soles of his feet and ankle-bones, the powers of soul and mind, are strengthened by the aid of that grace which God has left to His Church, so that the sinner, before powerless, has now power given him by which he may praise God by the consistency of his life. But the mercy is not confined to the pardoned soul; every conversion from death unto life, from Satan's slavery to the freedom which God gives, is a cause of wonder to the crowds around, and the beginning of repentance and conversion to many whose hearts have been estranged from God, and whose ears have been long deaf to His call. John x. 7.
Ferus.
Salmerons.

(12) *And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

ing to general belief, on the east side of the temple (σποά ἀνατολική). Some think that it was a portion of the old temple, and therefore the work of Solomon, which had survived the destruction under Nebuchadnezzar; this agrees with the assertion of Josephus (see Antiq. xx. 9. 7). Others, however, think that it was a new porch standing on the site of the old one, built by Solomon, and that for that reason it retained his name (Rosenmüller). The porch

is said to have consisted of a double row of columns twenty-five cubits in height, supporting a carved roof of cedar. The breadth of this porch was thirty cubits. —See *Lightfoot on the Temple*.

¹ "Porta templi speciosa Dominus est, per quem si quis introiret, salva-bitur. Ad hanc portam debilis Israel ire non valens, legis prophetarumque vocibus affertur, ut ab ingredientibus in interiora, sapientiam fidei audiendo deposcat auxilium." — *Bede*.

*Ye men, whom it behoves to put away childish things, who have the use of reason and the power of men, who are of the family of Israel and not pagans. Ye who have the law and the prophets, to whom have been committed the oracles of God, and who have seen and known the mighty works of God in the deliverance of your fathers and the preservation of your nation, think not, as the heathen, that the power to do miracles is in man, ascribe not to us the Divine power, but look through and beyond us to God, who has done so great things in proof of the truth of the words spoken by us.*¹

Rom. iii. 2.

Salmeron.

Alford.

Olshausen.

Though piety or holiness imparts to man a real power by uniting the individual to God, still, however he may be enabled to exercise the power, yet is it wholly Divine. It is God's power working by the instrumentality of man.

Matt. xxvii. 2,

20.

Mark xv. 11.

Luke xxiii. 18.

John vii. 39.

xii. 16; xvii.

1; xviii. 40;

xix. 15.

Acts v. 30;

xiii. 28.

(13) *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified² his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate,³ when he was determined to let him go.*

Peter shows to the multitude of Jews that it was no new revelation, no new religion, which the Apostles had been commissioned to preach, but that which God of old had given to the patriarchs. He speaks of God as He had been named by Moses, as He who, though the God and Creator and Preserver of the whole earth, yet condescended to be known as the God of man, as *the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob*, the Father of the Jewish people, and those to whom the promise of the seed in whom all mankind was to be blessed had of old been made; and as Moses proclaimed his mission to the people in Egypt, so does St. Peter proclaim his mission from Him who was *the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob*.

Lorinus.

This triple repetition of the name of God seems a reference to, and an indication of the Triune nature of God,

¹ "*Nos quia intuemini—Miracula quasi quædam sigilla Deus verbo suo affixit, quibus certificemur non hominum, sed Dei verba esse, quæ tantis signis soli Deo possibilibus confirmata videmus.*"—*Ferus*.

² "Glorificare Jesum est gloriam ejus, ad quam exaltatus erat, mundo et hominibus patefacere, ut eam agnoscerent, ut Filio suo, gloriam et laudem

pararet ex ore hominum. Erat in Se gloriosus sed gloria ejus non erat nota hominibus. Hoc igitur fine per discipulos Jesu hoc miraculum Deus operatus est."—*Streso*.

³ "*Πιλάτου*, of Pilate. *Πιλάτος* has always the article in St. John, but never in the Acts. Comp. Winer, p 103."—*Wordsworth*.

whilst the addition *the God of our fathers*, as an equivalent of the name *the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob*, marks the unity of the essence of God. Salmeron.

God *hath glorified His Son Jesus*, and borne witness to His claims to be the Messiah—

(1) By the resurrection and ascension of Him whom the Jews had crucified, of which the Apostles were the witnesses. Lyra.

(2) By working this miracle at the invocation of Christ by His Apostles, and thus attesting the mission and exaltation of Christ. The Jews had delivered Him up and clamoured for His death, because, as they said, He had blasphemed God, but the Father confirmed the truth of His words, and proclaimed Him to be His Son, by raising Him from the dead. Chrysostom.
Lorinus.
Fromond.

Salmeron.

Ye—the common people—*delivered up the Messiah*, and denied that ye had any other king but *Cæsar*, and compelled *Pilate* to consent to His death, even when he had declared Him innocent, and had *determined to let Him go*. Matt. xxvii.
2.
Luke xxiii. 16.
John xix. 15.

In place of *Son*, most critics prefer to translate *παῖς* by *Servant*. This was the name by which the Messiah was known, and the prophecy in which He is thus named was expressly applied by the evangelist to Christ.¹ *Behold My servant, whom I have chosen, My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles*. Indeed it was because *being in the form of God . . . He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man*, that *God hath highly exalted Him*, or, in the words of St. Peter, *hath glorified His Son Jesus*. Chrysostom.

Matt. xii. 18.

Phil. ii. 6, 7,
9.

¹ "*παῖδα*, not Son but Servant; servant, however, in that distinct and Messianic sense which the same expression bears in Isa. xl.—lxvi. in the LXX. *υἱός* is the name always used to designate Jesus as the Son of God. The above meaning is adopted by all the best modern commentators, Pisc., Bengel, Olsh., Meyer, De W., Stier." —*Alford*. "*παῖς* corresponds to the Hebrew word *עַבְד*, which is so frequently applied to the Messiah. The Seventy translate it by *παῖς*, which word occurs also in Matt. xii. 18, in a citation from the New Testament. According to the same usage, David also is called *παῖς* in Acts

iv. 25, and the people of Israel in Luke i. 54—69. This name accordingly stands less related to the person of our Lord than to His office." —*Olshausen*. "None of the Apostles is ever called *παῖς θεοῦ*, but only *δοῦλος θεοῦ*." —*Gloag*. "The word *παῖς* is applied to Christ in Acts iii. 26; iv. 27—30. It is observable that it is followed by the word *Ἰησοῦς*, and is never used to describe the eternal generation of the Divine Logos, but is employed to designate His generation in time as the *Man Christ Jesus*, and so marks the distinction of the two natures in one person." —*Wordsworth*.

When He dwelt amongst men, and humbled Himself to the nature of man, the humanity was chiefly evident in the actions of our Blessed Lord: now He is exalted, and the Godhead is shown forth to men.

Ferus.

Ps. xvi. 10.
Mark i. 24.
Luke i. 35.
Acts ii. 27;
iv. 27; vii.
52; xlii. 14.

(14) *But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer¹ to be granted unto you:*

These are the two charges which St. Peter makes—

(1) That the Jews betrayed or *delivered up* Jesus to the Romans.

Salmeron.

(2) That they *denied the Holy One* to be the Messiah, the King of the Jews. They denied Him to be *Holy* and *Just*, and accused Him of being seditious and of claiming to be their King instead of Cæsar.

Estius.

The Apostle first speaks of Christ as the Son, the Messiah who was to come into the world: here he declares Him to be *the Holy One*, essentially holy, and the source of holiness to man, and also *the Just*, the justifier of mankind, and finally, in the next verse, as the author of life.² Through Him, all who are in any degree holy, derive this holiness, they are sanctified, and justified, and have heaven and eternal life given to them. He is *the Holy One and the Just*, in a sense beyond all others. He is *Holy*—

Ferus.

Estius.

(1) Formally, through the hypostatic union of the Divine nature with the flesh of man conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin, by means of which union Christ Jesus is the source of all holiness in man.

(2) Accidentally, from the abundance of grace which habitually resided in Him, by which He was *Holy*, the Sinless One.

(3) Efficiently—He is the source and author of all holiness and sanctification in man.

Lorinus.

And desired a murderer. In opposition to Him who was and is *the Holy One and the Just* you preferred a man, a murderer, and setting free this murderer, you murdered Him who is *the Prince of life*.³ St. Peter places their sin before them in the strongest light, by means of this antithesis.

Bengel.

Lienard.

¹ ἄνδρα φονέα, a man, a murderer, as opposed to God, who is 'the Author of life.'

² Expressè additur articulus, ut aliqua singularitas intelligitur. Angeli etiam sunt sancti et justi, fideles homines etiam, sed Christus appellatur Ille Sanctus, idque propter duas causas. 1. Quia est Ipse sanctitas et justitia

essentialis. 2. Quia est auctor sanctitatis et justitiæ quæ est in aliis."—*Streso.*

³ "Auctorem verò vitæ. Est antithesis, virum homicidam et mortis innocentium auctorem postulastis ad vitam; Christum verò veræ vitæ auctorem postulastis ad mortem, et morti tradidistis."—*Menoehius.*

(15) *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead ; whereof we are witnesses.*¹

Acts ii. 24, 32.
Heb. ii. 10;
v. 9.
1 John v. 11.

The *Prince* or *Author of life*, and the leader into that life which is eternal. St. Peter seems to increase in boldness in this his second discourse before the people, and speaks of higher truths, for which the minds of the multitude which listened to him had been prepared by *the wonders and signs* which had been *done by the Apostles*.²

Beza.

Fromond.
Acts ii. 43.

Christ was *the Prince* or *Author of life*, inasmuch as the life which He had was from Himself, for the Prince of life must be *the life* itself, and being the Author and Giver of life He raised up Himself and restored life to His body, which had tasted death for us on the cross.

Chrysostom.

Œcumenius.

Whom God raised from the dead.³ The Divine nature which had been united to the body of man, raised that body from the dead ; so that in vain, St. Peter seems to say, was your sin in killing Him who could not be holden of death.

Fromond.

From Him, who is *the Prince of life*, is derived, according to His Divine nature, the natural life which we all have, as well as the life of grace, and the life of glory : in His human nature, by His death on Calvary, He renewed the life of grace and glory which had been decayed by sin, and restored to all mankind the life of nature, in giving to our nature the power of rising from corporeal death.

Dion. Carth.

(16) *And his name through faith in his name⁴ hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know : yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*

Matt. ix. 22.
Acts iv. 10;
xiv. 9.

Faith in *His name*, that is, in Himself, in Christ, *hath made this man strong*—it is not, St. Peter again states, *by our own power or holiness, we have made this man to walk.*

¹ "τὸ οὗ, tam de persona Jesu, quàm de re, nempe Resurrectione ejus post Crucifixionem et mortem accipi potest. De utraque enim testari debuerunt, Act. i. 8, 22; v. 32. Vide et Act. xxii. 15, de Paulo."—*Eras. Schmidt.*

² "Christus, Heb. ii. 10, ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας vocatur. In utroque loco acumen latet atque emphasis. Hic morti datus dicitur auctor vitæ. ἀρχηγός, auctor; quo sensu reperitur in Isocratis *Orat. de permut.* τῶν παρόντων ἀγαθῶν ἀπάντων αὐτοῖς ἀρχηγοί. Heraclides Ponticus allegor. Hom.

Homerum vocat ἀρχηγὸν πάσης σοφίας."—*Rosenmüller.*

³ "A Mortuis — Melius dicitur Christum resurrexisse à mortuis quàm à morte, quia pro omnibus mortuus est, et per Eum alii surrexerunt; sed fidelis debet resurgere à morte, non à mortuis."—*Hugo de S. Charo.*

⁴ "Mos est Hebræorum Nomen bis repetere etiam diverso casu ut parcant Pronominibus, ut Gen. xiv. 21; xx. 12; xxiii. 18, 19; xxiv. 1, 2; Num. x. 29; Ps. lxxxii. 1; 1 Sam. xii. 1; Zach. i. 6; Ps. xiii. 4; xiv. 4."—*Grotius.*

Corn. à Lap.
Ps. cxv. 1.

Peter refuses to accept any of the glory coming from this miracle. His cry is, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise.*

Estius.

Though the lame man had faith to obey the command of Peter, and to rise up and walk at his bidding, yet this confidence in the Apostles' power, still less any faith or expectation of the lame man that he could receive *an alms of them*, is not the faith here referred to. That he afterwards believed in Christ, was not the prior belief in Christ's power which is here indicated. The argument of St. Peter

Sanchez.

Fromond.

is this, We, the Apostles, had faith, and *through this faith in His name*, which we have from Him, has this man obtained perfect soundness.¹ This faith was from Christ as its author, and centred in Christ as its object.

Lorinus.

Chrysostom.

Luke xxiii. 34.
John xvi. 3.
Acts xiii. 27.
1 Cor. ii. 8.
1 Tim. i. 13.

(17) *And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.*

Hofmeister.

Lorinus.

St. Peter, having first moved his hearers to repentance by showing them the greatness of their sin in denying *the Holy One*, and in preferring a murderer to the Prince of life, now encourages them to rely upon the mercy of Him whom they had rejected, because they had done all this *through ignorance*; thus pouring into the wound which he had made both oil and wine, first cleansing their heart by repentance, and then softening it by the gentleness of his words: *I wot that through ignorance ye did it.*²

Calvin.

Unless the hope of pardon is held out to the sinner, the sight and sense of sin does but harden his heart and drive him to despair.

They were ignorant of His personality, knew Him not as the Eternal One, their King. Whatever the *rulers* might have known, the people knew Him not as the Messiah predicted by the prophets;³ not that they, however, were ignorant

¹ "Est hinc triplex hebraismus.

Primo enim præpositio *in* ponitur pro *per*: *in fide*, id est, *per fidem*. Secundo, *fides nominis* passivè hinc vocatur fides quæ habetur nomini Christi, id est Christo ipsi: non enim activè fides Christi hinc vocatur illa, quam in se habet Christus (in Christo enim non fuit fides sed visio) sed passivè, quam scilicet nos habemus in Christum, qua credimus Christo. Tertiò, nomen Christi metonymicè vocatur ipse Christus nominatus et invocatus: vel certè ipsa invocatio nominis Christi."

—Corn. à Lapide.

² On the excuse which ignorance offers for sinful actions see Sanderson's Sixth Sermon ad populum, on Gen. xx. 6, §§ 11—28.

³ "Apud Judæos quidam erant majores, et quidam minores. Majores quidam qui eorum principes dicebantur cognoverunt Eum esse Christum promissum in lege: Omnia enim signa videbant in eo, quæ dixerant futura Prophetæ. Mysterium autem divinitatis Ejus ignorabant: et ideo Apostolus dicit, *Quod si cognovissent, nun*

of His innocence; this every circumstance of His betrayal, suffering, trial, and crucifixion proves. They were ignorant, moreover, of the purposes of God, which in their blindness they fulfilled. This *ignorance* of theirs was an extenuation of their sin in clamouring for His crucifixion, though it implied the greatness of the darkness which had gathered around their hearts through past sinfulness, a darkness which obscured the teaching of the prophets, and prevented their acknowledging the significance of His actions by which those prophecies were fulfilled.¹

Stier.

Rosenmüller.

Fromond.

(18) *But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

Ps. xxii.
Is. l. 6; iii. 5.
Dan. ix. 26.
Luke xxiv. 44.
Acts xxvi. 22.
1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

By the mouth. The prophets were but the means and instruments by whom God spoke. The words uttered were not theirs, but His. He spoke, again, by their *mouth*, not mouths, for *all* His *prophets* with one consent, with one *mouth*, declared the truths which He willed should be revealed to His people. It was a saying among the Jews, that the whole of the prophets prophesied exclusively of the days of the Messiah. No Rabbi at this time doubted that His life, and sufferings, and death were the subjects predicted by David, Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah.²

Fromond.

Sylvêira.

Cook.

The Apostle here affirms—

(1) That the death of Christ was pre-ordained of the Father for the putting away of sins.

(2) That His death was predicted by the prophets; that though He was put to death by man, yet He died of His own will. In saying this, St. Peter does not deny the sin of those who crucified their Lord, since they were ignorant of such purpose; but he encourages them amid the sense of their sin to turn to Him who was pre-ordained to destroy sin, and who came to do the will of His Father in submitting to death.

Lorinus.

quam Dominum gloriæ crucifixissent. Sciendum tamen quod eorum ignorantia non eos excusabat à crimine: quia erat quodammodo ignorantia affectata; videbant enim evidentia signa divinitatis ipsius; sed ex odio et invidia Christi, ea pervertebant et verbis ejus, quibus se Dei filium fatebatur, credere noluerunt. [Vide Joan. xv. 22, 24.] Minores, id est, populares, qui mysteria Scripturæ non noverant, non plenè cognoverunt Ipsum esse nec Christum nec Filium Dei; licet enim aliqui

eorum in Eum crediderint, multitudo tamen non credidit.”—*Th. Aquinas. Pars iii. quæst. xlvii. art. 5.*

¹ “Une ignorance qui vient de la corruption et de l’aveuglement du cœur, peut être un péché, un effet du péché et un principe de péché, loin d’excuser de péché.”—*Quesnel.*

² “Omnes prophetæ in universum non prophetarunt nisi de diebus Messiae’ (*Sanhedr.* 99.1) was not merely a Jewish view, but the real truth.”—*Alford.*

Acts ii. 38.

(19) *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*

Chrysostom.

Rosenmüller.

Gorranus.

De Sacy.

Corn. à Lap.

Repent ye of all your sins, not only of the sin of rejecting and crucifying the Prince of life, but of all your sins, and as you have turned from Christ by denying Him, now be converted, turn to Him, that your sins, even those which ye did through ignorance of the full truth respecting Christ, may be blotted out, so that (ὁπῶς ἂν)—not when¹—the time of refreshing shall come to you, as it will to others, you may behold the Lord and stand in His presence with joy.

De Sacy.

Lorinus.

Lest the Jews should think that their ignorance of the personality of Christ and of His nature would save them from the need of repentance, St. Peter here exhorts them earnestly to *repent*. Their ignorance was but the reason why they might hope for pardon for their sins, not the reason why they needed no forgiveness from God. But he not only bids them *repent*, he adds, *be converted*. As they had wandered away from God, he calls upon them to return, to retrace their steps along the road in which they had formerly walked; and in turning to God, he exhorts them to turn away from those actions in which they had formerly delighted.² Real conversion involves sorrow and anguish for past sins, as well as future change of life. One without the other is incomplete, there is no conversion from sin without sorrow on account of past sin, and repentance is barren, and often only the motive for despair, unless conversion be added to it. Judas truly repented of his great sin, but because he trusted not in his Master's power and willingness to forgive, he never entered upon the path of conversion.

In thus calling them to repent and be converted, St. Peter declares two truths—

Calvin.

(1) That God will accept the sincere conversion of the sinner, for in vain the call to repent, and to walk again with God, unless we have the assurance of His willingness to forgive.

(2) He declares also the freedom of our will, for in vain

¹ ὁπῶς ἂν—ut, *Fulg.*, *Grotius*: ut superveniant, *Irenæus*, l. ii. c. 12: ut superveniant, *Tertul. de Resur. Carn.* c. 23: that, *Hammond*: in order that, *Wordsworth*, *Alford*. “ὁπῶς ἂν for ἵνα, *Matt.* vi. 5; *Luke* ii. 35; *Acts* xv. 17; *Gen.* xviii. 19; *Exod.* xx. 20; *Num.* xvi. 40; *xxviii.* 20; *Deut.* vii. 2.”—*Markland*.

² “Ἐπιστρέψατε — convertimini —

Vim habet verbum hoc, et nomen conversionis, quæ philosophicè loquendo est mutatio totius in totum et absolutissimam justificationem significat, quæ etiam eadem de causa vocatur nonnunquam creatio; et justificatus, nova creatura: tum ut significetur, gratiam produci in nobis ex nihilo, hoc est, sine meritis, sed gratis et secundum propositum divinæ voluntatis.” — *Lorinus*.

the call to repentance unless we have the power to obey that call. Lorinus.

That *the times of refreshing* may come. That your sins may be blotted out, and that you may receive the gift of peace and refreshment. Commentators differ in their interpretation of these words, *the times of refreshing*. The promise held out is that of rest and security and comfort after the heat and struggle of temptation, of persecution, and of affliction; and since all rest and security, all refreshment after danger and toil and suffering, may seem to be a fulfilment of this promise, some have understood by *the times of refreshing* the happiness of the times of the gospel covenant; others, that deliverance from danger and rest from persecution which happened to the Christians after the fall of Jerusalem; whilst the majority of commentators understand by these words the period of the general resurrection,¹ and the promise of that celestial happiness and eternal rest, after the trials and sufferings of this life are over, which shall be the lot of all those who have repented of their sins, have been converted from their evil ways, have received the forgiveness of their sins, and have been admitted into *the presence of the Lord*, from whom the rest which is promised must come.²

Arius Mont.

Corn. & Lap.

Kuinoel.
Stier.
Lightfoot.

Ecumenius.
Hammond.
Grotius.

Chrysostom.

Sylveira.
Menochius.
Fromond.
Lorinus.

Apart from the interpretation which would limit these words to the deliverance and peace which was granted to the Christians when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, there is no conflict between these explanations. If there be quiet and rest, and *times of refreshing* after the conflicts of this life are over, then in a measure this refreshment will even in this life be the lot of those who have repented, and have been converted, and have received the forgiveness of their sins,³ though the fulness of that rest may not be granted until mortality be wholly swallowed up of immortality.

These words, then, are true—

(1) In our outer life, and contain a promise that after the heat of trouble and affliction *times of refreshing* shall come from God.

(2) In our inner life—after the fire of repentance and

¹ "So the times of the Resurrection are by the Jew styled, the days of consolation. Targum in Hos. vi. 2."—Whitby.

² "Unde Vatabl. exponit, q. d. Quæ refrigeratio erit, cum rursus conspectus erit Christus."—Corn. à Lapide.

³ "Καίροι ἀναψύξεως—vox ἀναψυχῆς *otium, remissionem* denotat; Philo de Abrah. p. 371. c. ἡ ὄψις . . ἐν ταῖς ἀναψύξεσι καὶ ἀνεσεσι συνανίεται καὶ χαλᾶται. Oculi . . in otio et remissione simul remittuntur et relaxantur, h. l. felicissimum tempus."—Loesner.

Is. xxxviii.
17.

the bitterness of sorrow for sin, shall come that calm and peace which are inseparable from *the presence of the Lord*.

Lange.

(3) In the Eternal life—after all the toils and afflictions of this life are ended, then shall the souls of the penitent ones *hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

Rev. vii. 16,
17.

The sins of which we repent, the sins from which we turn away when we turn to God, are not to be superficially cleansed from our hearts; they are not to be hidden merely, they must be torn up by the roots: they are not merely not imputed, but are removed, they are *blotted out*; ¹ and because they have been so *blotted out*, the future state of the regenerate will be one of joy, light, and refreshment, and will be so because of that blessedness which *shall come from the presence of the Lord*.

Cern. & Lap.

Lorinus.

Sanchez.

Corn. & Lap.

In speaking first of the mercies granted to man through the death of Christ, and then calling upon men to *repent . . . and be converted*, St. Peter warns us that even the death of Christ on Calvary, His atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind, is not available to us unless we *repent and be converted*.

Salmeron.

(20) *And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:*²

Lightfoot.

Stier.

Gal. iv. 6.

And He shall send Jesus Christ unto you by the preaching of the gospel as He was before preached to you by the prophets; and to those who will receive He will send Him into their hearts; for, *because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

Alford.

Some suppose this promise to have special reference to the second advent of Christ; this, however, hardly seems the sense of the passage. We never read of Christ being sent into the world at His second advent, when He shall appear as our judge; and if this were intended, we should most probably have read of His being again sent.

Bengel.

¹ "Verbum εξαλείφειν proprie significat: obliterare, litura inducta ea que scripta sunt delere. Veteres in tabellis cera inductis, stilo ferreo inarabant, quando quod scriptum erat eradendum videbatur, stilum vertebant, et obtusa ejus parte ceram oblinebant, atque ita ante scripta corrigebant. Xen. H. G. 2, 3, 20. Athen. lib. 9, p. 403 F."—

Kuinoel.

² *Ut deleantur peccata vestra*—Quasi diceret ut Chrysostomus, non satis est ad expurgationem vestram aut Dei consilium, quo mortem Christi permisit aut vestra ignorantia, qua eum in crucem egistis; sed opus est penitentia per quam vestrum peccatum expietur."—Salmeron.

The practical lesson, however, remains to us, that the repentance and conversion of sinners is a means of increasing the number of the believers in Christ, and so of accelerating *the times of refreshing* to man. Camerarius.

(21) *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.* Matt. xvii. 11.
Luke i. 70.
Acts i. 11.

This and the two previous verses have been thus paraphrased—"Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that the times of refreshment may come from the presence of the Lord, and that the Father may send Him who was before preached unto you, even Christ Jesus, whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restoration of all things." Lightfoot.
Churton.

Whom the heaven must receive. The difficulty which the Jews had in receiving Christ as the Messiah arose out of the belief that He would set up an earthly kingdom, and abide on the earth as a temporal sovereign. This opinion the Apostle corrects by saying that it was necessary that *the heavens* should *receive* their Lord even *until the times*—not the season, but—*the times* when the reign of Christ should be permanent in the hearts and over the wills of men, according to the prediction and declaration of the prophets. For in the word *prophets* is included not only those who foretell future events, but all preachers of righteousness.¹ Kuinoel.

Wordsworth.
Lorinus.

The restoration of all things—until the times when the ruin wrought by the fall of Adam and the sin of mankind is at an end, when those whose bodies are bowed down in subjection to Satan shall know the freedom which is the inheritance of the sons of God, and wholly acknowledge and obey His commands, when that which had been lost by the wandering of the prodigal sons of God from their Father's house shall be restored, and the end of the present order of things in the world shall have come, and the general judgment shall have separated between the servants of God and the slaves of Satan. Menoehius.
Lorinus.
Until that time has come, Christ has entered, however, Dion. Carth.

¹ "Philo dicit, in lib. de Præm. et Pœnis, quòd Prophetæ est interpretes Dei dictantis intus oracula. Quasi dicas, virum sanctum, Dei voluntatem, cui se conformat, nosse et aliis exponere posse: quod Prophetiæ quoddam genus censi potest. Constat prætereà bonum Scripturarum interpretem nominari Prophetam: vel qui mentium sit inspector ut admonent Hieronymus, in cap. iv. epist. ad Ephes., Augustinus, Ambrosius."—*Lorinus.*

where He shall abide and for ever reign;¹ for of *His government there shall be no end*, and His rule shall be over those whom He has redeemed, and who have entered into the blessings of that redemption by their repentance and conversion. And *this restoration of all things* had been declared by God from the beginning, as soon as the fall of man took place, so that it was no new revelation which St. Peter was here making. Accordingly the Apostle prepares his hearers to receive and acknowledge this truth by telling them that it was what God had *spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets*—that the prophecy was not of man, though it was by man, God speaking and revealing His will *by the mouth of His messengers the prophets*—and that He did so from the beginning, *since the world began*, for of Christ and of the *times of restitution, Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied . . . saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints.*

Deut. xviii.
15, 18, 19;
Acts vii. 37.

(22) *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*²

Lorinus.
Gorranus.

Like does not imply absolute sameness of position nor identity of nature, since in such a case this prediction would not be applicable to Christ, who was born of the Blessed Virgin, and was the Redeemer of the world from sin, and the first-fruits from the tomb. It cannot, therefore, mean that Christ was to be only a man as Moses was, but that He

¹ *Until.* “Erasmus Schmidius et Raphaelius verba hæc conferunt cum illis Pauli, 1 Cor. xv. 25. Quod Petrus paulo obscurius dixit: ὅν δεῖ οὐρανὸν μὲν δέξασθαι, id Paulus quasi interpretans ait; δεῖ αὐτὸν βασιλεῦν. Itemque ista Petri ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων Paulus planissime eloquitur dicto clarissimi Psalmi cx. 1. ἄχρις οὗ ἂν θῇ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοῦς πόδας αὐτοῦ. Dominatur quidem jam nunc Dominus noster, sed in medio inimicorum suorum Ps. cx. 2, qui undique regnum ipsius attentant, neque unquam à bellis conquirere sinunt, tumultuantes et conspiratione facta imperii ejus jugum excutere conantes Ps. ii. 1, 2, 3. Neque prius hæ turbæ conticescent, quam Pater omnia subjecerit Filio suo. Tum demum

fiet illa ἀποκατάστασις, quando deletis hostibus, rebusque compositis et in eum, in quem oportebat, statum restitutus, Deo Patri regnam, nefaria defectione turbatum, tandem pacatum Christus reddet 1 Cor. xv. 24.”—*Wolfius.*

² “Προφήτην ἐκ μέσου σου ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου, ὡς ἐμὲ ἀναστήσει σοι Κύριος ὁ θεός σου, αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε . . . Προφήτην ἀναστήσω αὐτοῖς ἐκ μέσου τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν, ὥσπερ σὲ καὶ δώσω τὸ ῥῆμά μου ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ λαλήσει αὐτοῖς καθότι ἂν ἐντείλωμαι αὐτῷ· καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὃς ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ, ὅσα ἐὰν λαλήσῃ ὁ προφήτης ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐγὼ ἐκδικήσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ.” Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.—LXX.

should be given as the Leader of His people, the Prince of a nation that should be called after His name, and that He should resemble Moses as the antitype resembles the type. Lorinus.

A prophet, a preacher of righteousness, shall the Lord your God raise up—not for your merits or deservings. The word *raise up* carries with it an idea of a state of helplessness, if not of hopelessness, out of which the prophet was to be raised up *as a rod out of a stem of Jesse; and a branch . . . out of his root*, when all was desolation around. Is. xi. 1.
The promise carries us on to its fulfilment both in the Incarnation of our Lord, and also in His resurrection. Lorinus.

Our Blessed Lord was indeed a prophet like unto Moses. The points of resemblance are manifold. As Moses was born in a strange land, in Egypt, so was Christ born in a world and country which knew Him not, in a city which rejected Him, in Bethlehem. To preserve his life Moses was laid in an ark of bulrushes, as Christ's life was preserved by the lowliness of the manger in which He lay. Both were of the house of Israel, and children, the one of a priestly, the other of the Royal race. The jealousy of Pharaoh put the life of Moses in jeopardy as soon as he was born, as Herod sought the life of Christ because of the same jealous fear, whilst both kings ordered the male children to be slain, in order to preserve the stability of their respective thrones. Ecumenius.
Both were mediators between God and a sinful people, and as Moses pleaded for the children of Israel, so does Christ by His death and ascension plead for mankind. Both Moses and Christ were the legislators of God's people, the former for those under the first covenant, the latter for those under the second. As Moses led the people from slavery into the land promised to their fathers, so did Christ deliver His people out of the power of Satan, and go before them into heaven. Both Moses and Christ signified and proved the truth of their mission by miracles and signs. And as Moses sent forth the twelve to survey the land, and encouraged the people to persevere and to enter into Canaan, so did Christ send forth the twelve to teach the people by what means they might take possession of the spiritual Canaan.¹ Eusebius.

(23) *And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.* Dent. xviii. 19.

¹ See Surenhusius in his *βιβλος* Rev. J. B. M'Caul's Sunday Reflections, *Καταλλαγής*, pp. 396—402; also in pp. 67-92.

A *prophet* is one who tells us of the future, and Christ was pre-eminently a prophet. The whole gospel is a prophecy. Men desire to know the future, and they stretch forward to that which is beyond their reach. The desire is a natural one, and God gives them according to their desire, and by revelation makes known to them that which is needful for them to know: the things which shall befall the soul after death, the resurrection of the body, the blessedness of the just in life eternal, the punishment of sinners in their separation from Him in the life beyond the grave, the general judgment which awaits both saint and sinner, and such like truths. They who declare these truths of the future life are true prophets, and Christ, from whom the power and authority came by which His ministers proclaim these facts, was pre-eminently *that prophet*, from whom all true prophets derive their power to preach.

As the separation or cutting off unbelievers *from among the people* and congregation of Israel was the temporal punishment of him who disobeyed the law of Moses, so is such cutting off a type of the separation of unbelievers from Christ, and from the company of the justified in heaven.

Lorinus.

(24) *Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.*¹

The Apostle begins the roll of the prophets from Samuel, as it would seem, for several reasons.

Alford.

(1) Samuel was the first great prophet after the days of Moses, and is therefore appropriately cited as confirming this promise made by God through the mouth of Moses.

Hammond.

(2) The school of the prophets, the teachers of the people, was instituted by Samuel.

(3) From the days of Samuel until the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures was completed there is an unbroken line of prophets, so that they all seem to take their rise from him; whilst before his days there was *no open vision*, no plain manifestation of God's will.

Jerome.

Lorinus.

1 Sam. ii. 1.

¹ "We have Moses and Samuel mentioned together in this place, as also in Psalm xcix. 6; because there are few or no prophets between these two, 1 Sam. iii. 1, and the apparition of angels having been more frequent. And after the decease of Phinehas, it is a question whether there was any oracle

by Urim and Thummim, through the defect of prophecy in the high priests till the times of Samuel: but then it revived in Abimelech, Abiathar, etc. In Hieros. Chagigah, fol. 77, 1, we read that 'Samuel was the master of the prophets.'"—*Lightfoot, Hor. Heb. et Talmud.*

(25) *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*

Gen. xii. 3 ;
xviii. 18 ;
xxii. 18 ;
xxvi. 4 ;
xxviii. 14.
Acts ii. 39.
Rom. ix. 4, 8 ;
xv. 8.
Gal. iii. 8, 26.

Ye are the children of the prophets, from whose teaching ye ought not to swerve, from whose practice ye ought not to degenerate. St. Peter reminds them of their relation to the prophets, to incline them the more readily to receive their testimony ; and he encourages them to accept Him who was promised in the covenant which God made with our fathers, by reminding them that they were heirs of all the promises made in Him.¹

Sonship, however, and heirship to the promises of God, does not save them, nor will it save us from the necessity of repentance from sin and conversion to holiness of life, if we would indeed receive what He has promised.

In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, that is, none shall be blessed save in and through Him. All who are blessed derive their blessedness from Him, as He is the true light which lighteth every man—that is, every man who is lightened receives this light from Him who is the light.

All the kindreds of the earth. St. Peter never doubted of the ingathering of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ, nor that the promise made by God should be theirs, equally with the children of Abraham after the flesh, nor that His death was less available for cleansing their sins, than for blotting out the sins of the house of Israel. What, until enlightened by a special revelation from heaven, he did not know was, that the Gentiles should be gathered in without their first accepting the obligations of the old covenant, and becoming proselytes to Judaism.

(26) *Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.²*

Matt. i. 21 ;
x. 5 ; xv. 24.
Luke xxiv.
47.
Acts iii. 22 ;
xiii. 32, 33,
46.

¹ "Hebraico more $\eta\sigma$ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ *scilicet* alicujus si sæpe dicitur is, qui cum illa re ullo aliquo modo conjunctus est, ad quem illa res pertinet. In Vet. Test. *filii prophetarum* sunt *discipuli* prophetarum. Hoc autem loco omnes Judæi vocantur, quia Prophetæ ad eos missi erant, et quia libros prophetarum habebant. *Kai τῆς διαθήκης*, sc. *vioi*, id est quos promissio pertinet."—Rosen-

müller.

² "*A nequitia sua* — A vita sua nequam et prava, detestando eam et convertendo se ab amore sui ac rerum terrenarum ad amorem Dei. In hac enim conversione consistit præcipua Dei benedictio, propter quam nobis imperiendam Filium suum misit in mundum."—Fromond.

Unto you first. To the Jews *were committed the oracles of God*, to them was His gospel first sent, among them did Christ first teach, the disciples were bidden to deliver their message *among all nations*, but to make *beginning at Jerusalem* and salvation was first proclaimed to His chosen people the Jews. *God having raised up His Son*, or servant, *Jesus* from the dead, according to the prediction of the prophet *sent Him to bless you*, by making you through us partakers of the promises, and to receive that peace which cometh with the remission of your sins upon repentance.

Hofmeister.

Peter here asserts these several truths—

(1) That in His great mercy God sent His Son to the unbelieving Jews, that they might participate in the blessings of the covenant made with their fathers.

John iii. 17.

(2) That He sent His Son *into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved* and that repentance and conversion are the means by which men attain to this salvation.

Hofmeister.

(3) That none may deceive himself with false hopes of acceptance, merely from the fact of his sonship, and having been made an heir of the promises, but may know that the sinner can alone partake of the blessings procured by Christ when he has turned in faith to Him.¹

Hackett.

(4) That the Gentiles were in the end to be brought into Christ's fold, since it was only *first* to the Jews that the gospel was to be brought.

¹ "Il nous benit, quand il nous délivre par sa grace de la malediction du peché et de la loi: et cette grace est le fruit de son Incarnation. La conversion du cœur est la récompense qu'il

attend de ses souffrances et de son sang: mais comme elle en est la fin, faut aussi qu'elle en soit le fruit."—*Quesnel*.

CHAPTER IV.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

TIBERIUS.
PONTIUS PILATE.
CAIAPHAS.

(1) *And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,*

As they spake—meaning either that Peter spake for both, or that St. John as well as St. Peter addressed the multitudes which flocked to their teaching. It may be that one apostle addressed a portion of the crowd at one place, and the other those who gathered to them at a different quarter. Gorranus.
The captain of the temple was the Jewish priest who had charge of the temple, and held the command of the levitical guard. From the presence of this officer it is clear that the whole of this discourse of St. Peter was uttered within the precincts of the temple.² Whitby.

"It is remarkable that as we find the Pharisees to be the most forward and zealous against our Lord, during his ministry in the four Gospels, so the Sadducees in the history of the church. The reason is plain; it was the Pharisees chiefly whom our Lord reprobated. On the other hand, the disciples preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. This enraged the Sadducees; and for this they would use every contrived means to put them to death, had it not been for the milder counsel of Gamaliel the Pharisee."—*Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles*, p. 10 (ed. 1829).

The Rabbins say that "in three watches the priests kept watch and ward of the temple, viz. in Beth Abtines, in Nitots, and Beth Mokad. The Levites also in two and twenty places

more" (*Middoth*, cap. i.). Each of these watches had an officer over it, and the collective body of these officers seem to have been called "the captains of the temple" (Luke xxii. 52). "The captain of the temple," or "the ruler of the mountain of the house," was the chief of these captains. His duty was to visit every watch at night time with torches burning before him. If he found the Levites of the watch at their post he saluted them with the words, "Peace be with thee;" if he found the watch sleeping, he struck him with a stick, and might set fire to his garments. To this Lightfoot suggests reference is made in Rev. xvi. 15: "Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." In the time of the

Matt. xxii. 23.
Acts xxiii. 8.

(2) *Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

They all *grieved*—the priests naturally, because the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead was a proof that He was the *Holy One and the Just*, and therefore that they had crucified the Messiah. The Sadducees were grieved that the Apostles should openly declare the resurrection of the Saviour, and by so doing establish the truth of that doctrine which was denied by them—the resurrection of the body. For it is not merely the fact of Christ's resurrection which St. Peter had declared, but that *through Him* there should be granted to others also a resurrection from the dead.¹

Wesley.

Chrysostom.

The Apostles *preached through*, or in, *Jesus the resurrection from the dead*; that is, either they taught—

(1) That in the name of Jesus, by the power of Jesus, should this resurrection take place, or—

(2) That *through* the fact of Christ's resurrection, as the first-fruits from the tomb, had power been given to the whole after harvest to rise again, so that *in Christ* all should be made alive.

Corn. & Lap.

1 Cor. xv. 22.

Acts xxviii.
24.

(3) *And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.*

(4) *Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.*

As the two Apostles went up to pray at the ninth hour, which was after three o'clock in the afternoon, they worked this miracle, and then went into the temple to join in the public worship at that hour. This they did in company with the man who had been healed of his lameness. On leaving the temple, the fame of the miracle and the sight of the beggar restored to perfect health drew together a great multitude, which flocked to Solomon's porch, when the Apostles addressed them, as recorded in the

Maccabees it was not necessary that this officer should be a member of the priestly tribe, and we read that "one Simon of the tribe of Benjamin was made governor of the temple" (Σίμων τις ἐκ τῆς βενιαμὲν φυλῆς προστάτης τοῦ ἱεροῦ καθεστραμένος). 2 Macc. iii. 4; see *Joseph. Antiq.* xx. 6, § 2; *Bell. Jud.* vi. 5, § 3; *Lightfoot* on St. Luke

xxii. 4.

¹ *Alford* limits the meaning of the word *being grieved* (διαπονούμενοι) to the Sadducees, without, however, any sufficient reason for doing so. The Syriac copy reverses the order of the names, and speaks of "the Sadducees and the governors of the temple," *Sadducei et prefecti templo.*—*Novarinum*

last chapter. At the conclusion of their speech they were interrupted by *the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees*, which interruption could not well have taken place before seven or eight o'clock in the evening. For this reason, because the Sanhedrim could not then examine the Apostles, they were *put . . in hold until the next day*.¹

Though it was *eventide* when the Apostles were *put in hold*, the spiritual Light which they proclaimed was not dimmed, and the efficacy of their preaching was shown in the increase in the number of the believers, God consoling His faithful servants by allowing them to see these fruits of their labours.²

The number of the men was about five thousand. A question has been raised as to whether the *three thousand* before converted are included in the larger number. This cannot be known, though it seems most likely that the *five thousand men* added through conviction at the sight of the miracle were altogether in addition to those already added to the Church. Another question has been raised as to whether under the term *men*, women and children are included. This, however, is opposed to the meaning of the verse, and is improbable. Doubtless the women and children, who were added, largely increased the number of those converted at this time.

In this ingathering of the five thousand *men* there seems a fulfilment of the prophetic miracle of the feeding of the five thousand *men beside women and children* at Bethsaida, and the assurance that He who then bade His Apostles *give ye them to eat* was now blessing their labours, and enabling them to fulfil His commands in feeding with the bread of heaven as large a multitude as He satisfied with the five loaves and two fishes in the wilderness.

(5) *And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,* (6) *And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alex-*

¹ "Ad tempus ejus quod attinet singulis diebus confessus hic agebatur a sacrificio jugi matutino usque ad vespertinum, exceptis tamen diebus Sabbathi et diebus maxime festis, quod si illis tamen convenirent, non in conclavi Gazith, sed in antemurali, vel ut alii dicunt, in scholamontis templi id fiebat. Judicia autem de die incipienda et finienda erant, præterquam pecu-

niaria, quæ de die incipi debebant, sed noctu finiri poterant."—*Con. Ikenius in Antiq. Heb.* pars ii. cap. iv. § 14.

² Both miracles, that of the five thousand in the wilderness, see Mark vi. 35, and that of this great ingathering of "five thousand men" into the Church of Christ, were wrought in the evening.—"The gospel is God's last revelation."—*Wordsworth, from Bede.*

Quesnel.
Acts ii. 41.
Rosenmüller.

Menochius.

Fromond.

Chrysostom.

Matt. xiv. 16.

Euthymius.

Wesley.

Luke iii. 2.
John xi. 49;
xviii. 13.

ander, and as many as were of the kindred¹ of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Alford. Their rulers, the rulers, that is, of the Jews. The great council of the seventy-one, the *Sanhedrim*, instituted at the command of God, and consisting of the heads of the twelve tribes, whether lay or priestly.² The elders by station, the various official members of the Jewish Church, whose duty it was to preach; and the scribes, whose proper calling was to read and expound the law to the people, which they did on every Sabbath day. And with them was *Annas the High Priest*, so distinguished either as holding that office, or because he had long held it, though he had now been replaced by his son-in-law Caiaphas,³ and *John*, whom some suppose to be the son of Annas, Jonathan, who afterwards attained to the dignity of high priest; and *Alexander*,⁴ and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, and so eligible to succeed to this office, were gathered together at Jerusalem; that is, either—

Num. xi. 16.
Corn. & Lap.
Lorinus.
Lienard.
Corn. & Lap.
Menochius.

(1) That they were summoned from other places in the surrounding country,⁵ in order that they might take part in the proceedings of the council, or—

Lorinus.

(2) That they held their meeting and assembled in the city as distinguished from the temple: did not meet as formerly in the temple, but in the city. In support of this latter interpretation a passage is cited from the Rabbinical writings, which says that forty years before the destruction of the city, in consequence of the great increase of crime in

Lightfoot.

¹ "As many as were of the order of chief priests." The same phrase is used apparently in the same sense by Josephus, Ant. xv. 3, 1. These are the ἀρχιεῖς who formed part of the Sanhedrim (Matt. xxvi. 3; Acts v. 24), being the chiefs of the twenty-four priestly courses or families (ἐφημερίαι, Luke i. 5), which from the time of David performed the service of the sanctuary by weekly turns, 1 Chron. xxiv. For γένος in this sense see Galat. i. 14."—Humphrey. See also Sylveira in loco.

² On the Sanhedrim see note A at the end of this chapter.

³ On Annas and Caiaphas see note B at the end of this chapter.

⁴ "Alexander opibus, virtute ac potestate clarebat maxime Alexandria, ubi

erat Halabarcha, id est præfectus salis, ut inquit Josephus, Antiq. lib. xx. c. 3."—Sylveira. Alford remarks that "Pearson, Wolf, Krebs, and Mangey suppose Alexander to have been the brother of Philo-Judæus, mentioned by Joseph. Antiq. xviii. 8, 1. But," he adds, "this is very improbable; for he was Alabarch of the Jews at Alexandria, Jos. ibid." As Jerusalem, however, was at this time full of foreign Jews, nothing is more likely than that one of such great weight in so important a colony of the Jews as Alexandria was would have been taken into consultation at this moment.

⁵ "Some of the rulers may have lived out of the city, especially at that season when the heat had begun to be severe."—Hackett.

Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim removed their court from the temple, and established it in the city.

Avodah.
Zarah,
fol. 8, 2.

Here were gathered together all those who had recently conspired against Christ, and in their malice compelled the Roman governor to crucify Him. For a moment their fury seemed to have abated, and they were mild in their treatment of the Apostles. God restrained their hand, or the increasing number of the converts, and the favour of those who, though not converts to the religion of Christ, had seen with wonder the miracle which had been wrought by the instrumentality of Peter and John, kept the Jews from offering violence to the Apostles.

Corn. & Lap.

(7) *And when they had set them in the midst,¹ they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?*

Exod. ii. 14.
Matt. xxi. 23.
Acts vii. 27.

There is no attempt on the part of the rulers, the priests, and the scribes to take these two before Pilate, either, it may be, from remembrance of his unwillingness to pass sentence on Christ, or because the charge against the Apostles was not one which affected the civil rulers and the stability of the Roman power.

Novarinus.

They set them in the midst of the Sanhedrim. If, as some suppose, from a belief that these two defenceless and unlearned men would tremble at the array of power and learning which surrounded them, they were mistaken in their estimate of the firmness of the Apostles, conscious as they were of the presence within them of a power greater than that of their enemies.

Chrysostom.

They asked *by what power*, either magical or physical, *have ye done this?* They speak ambiguously, not confessing that it was a miracle which had been *done*, and contemptuously they call it *this*, something which they cared not even to name.² Modern unbelief differs from ancient unbelief in this respect. The modern infidel denies the fact of any miracle having been wrought: these unbelievers could not deny the fact, since it was seen and acknowledged by all, but they attributed it to witchcraft, to magic, or to the influence of an evil spirit.

Bengel.

Stier.

Baumgarten.

They asked them. If God suffers His mighty works, alike in nature and in grace, to be examined by men, how

¹ ἐν τῷ μέσῳ—in the midst. The members of the Sanhedrim sat in a semi-circle, the President being in the centre.

² "In qua virtute? Δυνάμει, id est,

quâ potentiâ. *Fecistis hoc?* Quasi dicant, non tam miraculum quàm prodigium artis magicæ, dæmonis viribus patratum."—*Menochius*.

Quesnel.

Luke xii. 11,
12.

much more content should we be that our feeble works should be scrutinized. The sin of these judges was not in their investigation of this miracle, but in their refusal to acknowledge the truth when it was made evident to them.

(8) *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,*

Novarinus.
Lorinus.
Salmeron.Luke xii. 11,
12.Menochius.
Deut. xxxiii.
25.

Filled with the Holy Ghost—St. Peter had received from his Lord the gift of the Holy Ghost when He breathed upon him and the rest of the apostles. He had received the gift to work miracles and to speak with tongues and to perform the duties of his office when the Holy Ghost descended upon him and the rest of the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Now, however, he received the special gift and grace from the same Spirit to make a true and unfaltering confession of Christ,¹ according to the command and promise which Christ had made to His apostles. *When they bring you unto their synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.* For great emergencies and heroic labours special grace is needed, and special strength given, for so has God said, *As thy day, so shall thy strength be.*

Gangæus.

2 Cor. iii. 17.

This gift of the Holy Ghost with which Peter was now filled freed him from the fear of man, and he who had before denied his Master in the judgment-hall of Pilate through fear, was now able to speak boldly on behalf of that Master before all the people by whom Christ had been crucified, for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, freedom from self, and with it freedom from slavish fear of man.*²

Though the power of the rulers and elders, the priests

¹ “*πλησθεῖς, being filled—at that very moment. The power which was dwelling in him put itself forth. As the exigency in each instance demands, so God moves his instruments. But πλήρης, full, when used, expresses habitual fullness: Acts vi. 3, 5, Stephen . . . full (πλήρη) of truth and of the Holy Ghost.*”—Bengel.

² “*Tunc repletus Spiritu Sancto Petrus—Habes hinc conditiones et boni prædicatoris et sanæ doctrinæ. Primò plenus fuit Spiritu Sancto, qui omni-*

bus Christianis maximè necessarius est, ut non modo credant Christo sed eundem imitari queant. 1 Cor. xii. 7—10. Ille enim ipse est qui nos omnia docet et suggerit quæ Christus docuit, Ioan. xiv. 26. Spiritum autem Sanctum à nobis ipsis non habemus, petendus igitur à Deo Patre, qui peccatis se dat Spiritum bonum, Luc. xi. 13. Maximè vero omnium necessarius est prædicatoribus verbi Divini. Hinc Christus iussit expectare eos, donec induerentur virtute ex alto.”—Ferus.

and the scribes, was exerted unjustly, yet in his address before the Sanhedrim Peter shows a courteous respect to those to whom for their stations' sake honour was due. Let us beware how we turn from this lesson, and lightly regard that which, however abused, is yet an ordinance of God, for *the powers that be are ordained of God*.¹ When oppressed by earthly rulers, this do, examine thyself, mark and repent thee of thy sins, and pray for them that *despitefully use thee*, that they also may depart from injustice and learn to do that which is right.

Rom. xiii. 1.

Matt. v. 44.
Perus.

(9) *If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;*

It is a *good deed* about which they are *examined*, and yet they make no claim to it themselves, but attribute it to Christ. And in alleging it to be a *good deed*, the Apostle implicitly denies that it is the result of magic, or the work of an evil spirit. Satan does not confer benefits upon man. Good gifts can only come from Him who is good. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above*. That it was a *good deed*, however, did not propitiate the rulers of the Jews, nor did the fact lead them to regard the apostles with greater favour. The hatred of the world against the Church springs too often from the very fact that it confers blessings and healing upon the people.

James 1. 17.

(10) *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

Acts ii. 24;
iii. 6, 16.

St. Peter continually returned to this great fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and so far as we can gather there was no attempt on the part of the Jews to suggest in accordance with the words put into the mouth of the soldiers that He had not really risen, but that the disciples had stolen Him away whilst the guard slept.

Matt. xxviii.
12, 13.
Wesley.

Whom ye crucified. Whilst Peter glories in the shame of the cross, he does not fail to charge all his hearers with having slain the *Prince of Life*. He says, *ye*—not your

¹ "Debemus ostendere in defensione bonæ causæ, ejus filii simus, Luc. ix. 55, 56. Non sufficit habere bonam causam sed etiam requiritur bonus modus agendi. Sic debemus facere in omni judicio, quo cum proximo litigamus. Præsertim, cum contra magistratus nobis res est, non debemus oblivisci honorem, quo à Deo honorati sunt."—*Streso*.

rulers only, but all you who by clamouring for His death affrighted the Roman Governor into permitting the crucifixion to take place. But though the sin was common to the rulers and the whole body of the people, yet the crime was greater in the rulers than in the people, since from their position they ought to have restrained the injustice and madness of the people.

Novarinus.

In this first speech of St. Peter before the Sanhedrim, the preacher of God's word may note—

(1) That he who is called to declare God's word to man should assure himself that he teaches that which is true—the words of God, and not the fables of man—that which is *known*.

(2) That he must be ready to confess the truth not only before the people, but also before the great, the rulers of the people. His mission is alike to the rich in this world's goods as well as to the poor.

(3) That courage to make known the whole counsel of God, and to declare His truth before all men, is the gift of the Spirit, and must be sought from Him. How that Spirit endued Peter with strength we may gather from this speech. He who in the hall of Pilate trembled before a maid-servant, now, when standing in the midst of the rulers of the Jews, boldly confessed the Master whom he had so lately denied.¹

Ferus.

(4) The minister of God may take comfort from the fulfilment of Christ's words to His disciples: *Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

Matt. x. 18—
20.

Ps. cxviii. 23.
Is. xxviii. 16.
Matt. xxi. 42.

“(11) *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*

Ps. cxviii. 23.
1 Pet. ii. 6—8.

St. Peter here quotes the words of David, *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.* In his Epistle he quotes the same words, and applies them, as he does here, to Christ. Our Blessed Lord, when pro-

¹ “Heureux qui est fidelle, comme S. Pierre à réparer son infidelité à la première occasion que Dieu lui présente! Il paye, pour ainsi dire, l'interêt de sa foiblesse passée, en rendant à Dieu en public et devant ceux qui sont maitres

de sa vie, l'honneur qu'il lui a ôté en secret et à la voix d'une servante. Dieu sçait bien se dédommager dans ses élus des fantes où il permet qu'ils tombent.”—*Quesnel*.

phesying of His own rejection and death, had before applied these same words of the Psalmist to Himself.¹ Matt. xxi. 42.

It has been questioned what the precise position of a corner-stone in a building was. We may note—

(1) It is the top-stone or completion of a building, and in this way it is an image of Christ, since He is the completion of the Christian Church; or— Villapandus.

(2) It is the foundation-stone, and thus resembles Him who is the rock on which the Christian Church ever rests; the one firm, immoveable foundation, on which the secondary foundation-stones, the twelve Apostles, reposed. The latter seems, on the whole, to accord with the name by which Christ is called, and by which He calls Himself—the *Rock*, and to the teaching of the Apostles, *other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*. But, in truth, both these images meet in the one expression, and both belong to Christ. He is the one sure foundation; He is also the top-stone and completion of the Church; at once the *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last*. The Rock which remains immoveable, which was unshaken by the temptations of this life, and unmoved amidst the insults of those who rejected Him. Like His word, the Church abideth sure, a beacon both to His own people and to the Gentiles, a place of refuge amidst the burning heats of earthly trials, so that He who is the Head of that Church might for this reason say, *I am the first, I also am the last*. Corn. & Lap.
Matt. xvi. 18.
1 Cor. iii. 11.
Rev. i. 8, 11.
Ferus.
Sanchez.
Is. xlviii. 12.

(3) This word *corner* is a Hebraism for ruler,² as, *Draw ye now hither all the chief*—literally all the corners—*of the people*. *Out of him came forth the corner, or ruler*. Thus Jeremiah, predicting the utter destruction of Babylon, says, *They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord*. In this sense, as He who rules and directs the Church of God, our Blessed Lord is the corner-stone, that which binds together and makes the house firm and secure from danger. This He does by His protecting rule. 1 Sam. xiv.
38.
Zech. x. 4.
Jer. li. 26.
Lorinus.
Jerome.

Christ is the *corner-stone* in that He being God and man has united these two natures, and by His Incarnation

¹ "This is the stone which the builders refused. Though the Chaldee paraphrast interprets this clause of the Psalmist, Psal. cxviii. 22, of David; and Aben Ezra, of the congregation of Israel; yet R. Solomon Jarchi, on Micah v., interprets these words of the Messiah, as our Saviour doth, Matt. xxi. 42, the Jews not contradicting

Him, or saying they belonged not to Him."—*Whitby*.

² Κεφαλὴν γωνίας—"Idioma Scripturarum est, ut angulum pro regno ponant, eo quod populos contineat, quasi in tota domo fortissimum sit. Unde et Christus duorum populorum parietes continens, lapis dicitur angularis."—*Jerome*.

has joined to the nature of God that nature of man which through sin had been separated from God. Again, He who is the corner-stone is one whose work is to *gather together into one* those who had been scattered and divided one from another, and to make of them *one fold* under *one Shepherd*, bringing both the children of Israel and the Gentiles into the Christian Church.¹

John xi. 52.

John x. 16.

Lorinus.

And this corner-stone was *refused* by the builders, by the priests and rulers and teachers of the people, whose duty it was to build up the people in the faith revealed by God, but who instead had built up the people in their own traditions, and in so doing had made void the very law which they were bound to guard and teach,² so that of Jerusalem it had been said by the prophet, *Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken.*

Dion. Carth.

Ezek. xlii. 27,
28.

The collective body of the Christian people is spoken of as *God's building*: therefore are His ministers builders under Him who is the Great Builder, and are called upon to build on no *other foundation*, and to lay on that foundation no other doctrines than those which have been delivered them to teach, thus approving themselves *unto God* as workmen *that needeth not to be ashamed*.

1 Cor. iii. 9.

1 Cor. iii. 11.

2 Tim. ii. 15.

Matt. i. 21.
Acts x. 43.
1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

(12) *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Neither is there salvation, or healing for the soul of man, *in any other* than Christ.³ The Apostle does not say there is no *salvation* except in our hearing of Christ, but there is no

Alford.

¹ *"Hic est lapis — Frequenter de Christo dicitur nomen lapidis et petreæ apud Esaiam, Daniele, Zachariam; denique inquit Paulus Petra erat Christus [1 Cor. x. 4]. Nam ut Cyprianus [2 cont. Jud. cap. xvii.] colligit, Christum adumbravit lapis, super quo dormiens Jacob, mysticam scalam vidit: in quo Moses lassâ deponens brachia in oratione perseveravit, quoad Amalech victus est: ex quo virga percusso largiter aqua fluxit: quo innixus Moses Dei posteriora vidit: quem David funda ejaculatum Goliath prostravit: cui Deus legem insculpti jussit: quem*

Josue in testimonium erexit: in quem imposita est arca Testamenti: cujus lapis adjutorii, cognomen Samuel esse voluit."—Lorinus.

² *"Quia ipsi in uno pariete stare, hoc est, soli salvi fieri malebant, reprobaverunt lapidem, qui non erat aptatus ad unum sed ad duos. Verum Deus illis licet nolentibus, hunc Ipse posuit in caput anguli, ut ex duobus testamentis, et ex duobus populis ædificatio surgeret unius ejusdemque fidei."*—Bede.

³ *"Pii homines pro nobis orare possunt sed non dare salutem."*—Ferus.

salvation except in and through Christ. The benefits of His life and death and resurrection will, we know, extend to many who have not heard of Him, for *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*¹ 1 Cor. xv. 22.

In this *name*, by His power, the fathers who died before the Incarnation of Christ, found *salvation*, as well as those who lived during His dwelling upon earth, and since His ascension into heaven. The means of access, indeed, were different. The sacraments were not in all respects the same, yet was the faith one, as there is but *one Lord*, since the faith of those of old rested, like ours, on one who alone could bring salvation. Their faith, indeed, was centred in one to come who had been promised as a deliverer, whilst ours rests upon Him who has already come: yet is the faith one, since it is a faith in the same Saviour, in Him who is one. Eph. iv. 5. Ferus.

(13) *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.* Matt. xi. 25. 1 Cor. i. 27.

When they *saw*, not merely heard, but marked the demeanour of the Apostles, and *saw* that it was not a boldness of words only, but a constancy and firmness of mind,² and when they *perceived* that they were *unlearned* in Rabbinical knowledge, and *ignorant men*, that is, men of low estate, for the word means both these things, persons without any special authority to teach, neither priests nor scribes,³ they *marvelled* and were astonished, until they remembered, or *took knowledge*, that they had been *with Jesus*. They recognized them as having been of His company, as having been in the hall of the high priest, for John was *known unto the high priest*, and from that know- Novarinus. Olshausen. Lightfoot. John xviii. 1.

¹ "Guillelmus Abbas apud Debrum ait: 'Totus ergo est desiderabilis; id est in Divinitate simul et Humanitate. Quippe in humanitate plenitudo Redemptionis et salutis est. In Divinitate enim plenitudo Divinitatis: omnis itaque sufficientia nostra in ipso est et propterea nihil desiderabile præter ipsum; desideratur in eo quod homo ad salutem, desideratur in eo quod Deus ad beatitudinem, solus igitur ille desiderabilis est, sed et totus, quia plenissime solus sufficit.' Omnia sunt in Ipso et præter Ipsum nihil desiderabile."—*Sylveira*.

² "Plerique fortes et constantes in Dei obsequio sunt, sed verbis duntaxat, et voce, non rebus, non factis. Infirma hæc fortitudo est, et inconstans constantia, quæ in ore solummodo apparet, non apparet in actu."—*Novarinus*.

³ "ἀγράμματοι, indocti, in literis sive Scriptis Prophetarum non admodum exercitati. ἰδιῶται—autem, sunt privati, qui τὰ ἴδια agunt, et cum publicis nihil negotii habent; ideoque parum docti, aut rerum civilium, multò minus Scripturæ Prophetarum gnari consentur."—*Eras. Schmidt*.

Lorinus.

ledge had interest enough to bring in Peter also into the scene of their Master's trial. All the Apostles, indeed, must have been known to the multitude, who had seen them *with Jesus* when He taught throughout Judæa and Galilee and in the company of His Apostles did mighty works in their towns and villages.

Fromond.

Peter and John were not then *ignorant* in our sense of the word, but they were unauthorized as the priests and scribes held.¹ Though the Apostles had supernatural grace given to them by which they were able to understand and to unfold the meaning of the Scriptures, yet this power of writing, as evidenced in the Gospel of one, and the Epistles of both, shows that they were not devoid of learning, even if they possessed little of the learning which the world esteems.

Estius.

They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Happy is he of whom it can be said that his whole life, his speech and actions, mark him out as one who has been by the side of Jesus; has been taught by Him, has been strengthened by His Spirit, and is guided by Him in all that He says and does!²

Norarinus.

John xi. 47.
Acts iii. 9—11.

(14) *And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.* (15) *But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,* (16) *Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.*

Lorinus.

John ix. 1—
41.

Beholding the man which was healed standing, and by standing affording proof of the miracle, they could say nothing against it, could not say that the case was imaginary, could not say that it was not he who had been known for years as a lame man, and yet they refused to acknowledge what they could not deny.³ As before, when Christ gave sight to the man who had been born blind, so now, when the Apostles had healed the man lame from his mother's womb, the man on whom the miracle had been wrought

¹ "Nonnius et Symmachus idiotas dicunt esse, qui res curant suas, sibi non plurimis utiles, nihil patriæ impetientes."—*Lorinus*.

² "Christianorum scientia non è literis mundanis, sed è Spiritu Sancto petenda. Mirabilis Christianorum scientia: qui Christum agnoscit, doctior

est omnibus philosophis."—*Ferus*.

³ "Les plus grands miracles peuvent confondre et reduire au silence les plus obstinés, mais ils ne les peuvent convertir, si Dieu en même temps ne touche le cœur. On voit ici les suites funestes d'un engagement de haine et d'envie."—*Quesnel*.

was brought and placed with them in the midst of the Sanhedrim, to extort, it would seem, a confession from him that the miracle had been done by some other power, natural or magical, than that of Christ. The steps taken, however, to obscure the truth were made the means of declaring more openly the power and glory of the Saviour. Hofmeister. But though the clearness of the miracle silenced them, it could not cure the hardness of their hearts. Though they Baxter. could not deny the truth because it was obvious to all, yet they would not confess it; and thus they went on from sin to sin, refusing to listen to the voice of conscience, refusing to own that which they yet knew, and so adding to the hardness of their hardened hearts. In this way is sin made the punishment of sin, and the means by which we sin become the means of our chastisement.¹ Ferus.

Having bidden the Apostles go apart whilst they deliberate on the way by which they may arrest the movement among the people, the rulers make their sole deliberation what steps they should take to silence the Apostles, and to prevent the spread among the multitude of a belief in Christ. *What shall we do to, or with, these men?*

(17) *But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them,² that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.* (18) *And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.* Acts v. 40.

In order to prevent the spread of Christ's doctrine, the rulers commanded the Apostles, neither in public nor in private, to speak anything respecting Christ. They bad Grotius. them speak nothing *in this name*—that is, nothing concerning the Saviour, His life and actions, nor of the doctrines which He had delivered to the Apostles to *teach* the people? Eras. Schmidt.

(19) *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* (20) *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* Acts v. 29. Acts i. 8; ii. 32; xxii. 15. 1 John i. 1, 3.

¹ "Deus peccatum peccato punit. Sicque demum deleantur è libro jurorum: item Osee ix. 15, dicit, *Propter malitiam adinventionum eorum jiciam eos de domo mea, non diligam eos amplius.*"—Ferus.

² "ἀπειλή ἀπειλησώμεθα. *Let us threaten with threatening; let us forbid them with menaces—a Hebraism.* See Isa. vi. 9; Exod. v. 12; and John iii. 29; Acts v. 28; xxiii. 14; 2 Pet. iii. 3. Vorst. de Heb. pp. 624, 625.

The Apostles were obeying Christ's commands, and were beginning at Jerusalem as a preparation for preaching in His name among all nations; but in hearkening to Him they declared they were hearkening to God. Here is an assertion of the Divinity of Christ. *We cannot, it is not lawful for us to keep silence, we cannot in our conscience hesitate to hearken unto you more than unto God; we cannot but speak the things which we have seen*—the death and resurrection of Christ, of which we are witnesses, as well as those things which we have heard—the truths which have been taught us by our Master.¹

The Apostles' plea is this, that they are standing in the sight of God, to whom they have to render account of their stewardship of the mysteries of the kingdom, and from whom nothing is hid, and they say, *Judge ye, who are the rulers of the people, whether it be right for us to keep silence, and to conceal that of which we are witnesses. They discard all thought of how their conduct may appear in the sight of, and how it may accord with the opinion of, men, and they ask, Is it right in the sight of God? The tribunal of man they say is not our ultimate appeal; the question is, what is right for us to do in the sight of God, ought we to obey or to disobey His commands?*

He who has ever in his mind the remembrance of God, and stands always consciously in His sight, will, if called upon to judge, decide justly, and if called upon to act, will not fail in his duty to God and man.

(21) *So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. (22) For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.*

They let them go. In so doing the Sanhedrim did not acquit them, though it owned that there was no sufficient charge against them, nothing for which they could be condemned or punished. The accused when so dismissed could at any time be recalled, and again examined on the old charge, and if convicted could be punished. The Sanhedrim per-

The Hebraisms show St. Luke has been studious to preserve the very words of the speakers."—*Wordsworth*.

¹ *Non possumus . . . non loqui.*
"Ut ait Lyranus, 'Non possumus

licitè: vel 'quia vino cœlesti ebriari se continere non poterant,' inquit Gregorius [in 1 Reg. c. i, lib. 1], 'et à prædicationis fervore minis victi tepescere nolebant.'"—*Lorinus*.

Matt. xxi. 26.
Luke xx. 6,
19; xxii. 2.
Acts iii. 7, 8;
v. 26.

Grotius.

mitted the two Apostles to depart *because of the people*, from fear of them, *for all men glorified God*, since they confessed that the miracle was done by the power of Christ, and therefore that Christ could not have been a blasphemer in *making Himself equal with God*, for *God heareth not sinners*; so that though the multitude might not acknowledge nor even see the conclusion of their reasoning, yet they did own the Divinity of Christ.¹

John v. 18.
John ix. 31.

Lienard.

For the man was above forty years old, his lameness was therefore inveterate, and his inability to stand upright had been long known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem. Again, he was old enough to bear ample testimony to the *healing* which had been wrought by the power of Christ at the word of the Apostles, and could medical skill have healed him he would have been cured long before the time when Peter and John beheld him lying at the Beautiful gate of the temple.

Arias Mont.

(23) *And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.* (24) *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:*

Acts xii. 12.

2 Kings xix.
15.

The writer dwells upon the fact that they were *let go* merely; they were neither declared to be innocent, nor yet were they punished as though they had been guilty. *They went to their own company*—not necessarily to the rest of the Apostles merely, and yet not meaning to the whole body of the faithful, since no one room could contain the thousands who now confessed Christ, *and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said.* Under this word *chief priests* is included—

Menochius.

Olshausen.

(1) All those who had held the office of high priest, of whom there were several then alive.

(2) The Sagan and his deputies, the rulers of the temple.

(3) The heads of the twenty-four courses of priests, who by turn performed the duties of the temple worship.

¹ "Le peuple est plus ouvert que les grands à la vérité et plus prompt à reconnoître Dieu dans ses miracles. Il en benit et glorifie Dieu, pendant que les Sénateurs, les magistrats, et tout l'ordre sacerdotal n'en ont que du dépit et du chagrin: tant il est vrai que la

grandeur et la puissance sont ordinairement de grands obstacles au salut."—*Quesnel*.

"Le salut est pour les petits: les grands du monde y ont peu de part; au moins leur grandeur y est ordinairement un grand obstacle."—*Huré*.

They lifted up their voice in prayer and thanksgiving. These are the due uses of persecution,—it drives men to more earnest prayer,¹ and to the throne of their heavenly Father for protection, as children when terrified or in danger fly for protection to their earthly parent. In common prayer is the refuge of the Church in all times of danger and persecution. And this the disciples did *with one accord*, with one heart, and one will, all uttering the same words, or led by one, the rest assenting to the words uttered by him. Whether this *accord* were miraculous or not, it reveals to us the assembled body of the faithful full of the knowledge of the same saving truths and desiring the same gift from God's hand, and this because they were moved by the *one Spirit*.

The visible miracle which gave to the Apostles one speech was but the outward token of the operation of the Holy Spirit, by which He made them to be of one heart.

Ps. ii. 1. (25) *Who by the mouth of thy serrant David has said, Why did the heathen rage,² and the people imagine vain things?* (26) *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.*

Thou who hast of old time spoken *by the mouth of Thy serrant David*, now look upon the threats, and still the rage and madness of *the people*, for Thou art the same, the one and unchangeable God. In the union of King Herod and Pilate and *the rulers gathered together* against Christ the Apostle notes the fulfilment of the prediction of David.

Thy serrant David. The word here is child (*παῖδός*), used commonly of a servant, according to a form of speech among the Jews, by which a servant is called a child, even though he should be of mature age. It may be that this arose from the circumstance that many of the servants were brought up in the family from their youth, or were *born in*

¹ *Omnes levaverunt vocem suam ad Deum.* "Christianus in adversis assiduis precibus vacet. Sic Christus, vigilate et orate ne intretis in temptationem [Matt. xxvi. 41]: ita quod docuit verbis, factis expressit Christus ante acerbam passionem suam. In cruce non permanet, nisi qui devotis inhæret orationibus, Exemplum in Apostolis fugientibus et negantibus in passione Christi. Ideo omnes pii pri-

mò omnium orationes fundant humile et pias in tribulatione ne deficiant. Exemplis hujus rei plena sunt scriptura omnia."—*Ferus.*

² *ἵππων αἶσαν*, is properly said of horses, and of their *fremitus* or snorting. (*Ammon., Suidas, Wetst., Valek*). The Gentile world was typified by the untamed colt ridden by Christ. Matt. xxi. 2."—*Wordsworth.*

the house. The relation of the master to his servants was Fromond.
among the Hebrews that of a father.

(27) *For of a truth [in this city]¹ against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,* Matt. xxvi. 3.
Luke i. 35;
iv. 18; xxii. 2; xxiii. 1, 8.
John x. 36.

Against thy Holy Child (τὸν ἅγιον παῖδά σου), or servant, Alford.
Jesus. Either word will agree with and apply to Christ, since
though a Son, yet in taking upon Him man's nature *He took upon Him the form of a servant*, and became, as to Phil. ii. 7.
that same nature, the minister or servant of the Father. Fromond.
Though He was a servant in this respect, He was yet the
anointed of the Father, not merely by means of the fulness of
grace poured out upon Him without measure, but because Menochius.
of the hypostatic union of God with man in His person.²

In this very city (ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ), thy favoured city,
thine own city, were gathered together against *Thy Holy Child*, Herod Antipas the King, and Pontius Pilate the Wordsworth.
Roman Governor, and the Gentile soldiery, and the people
of Israel who clamoured for His crucifixion, and who all of Lienard.
them shared in this crime.

(28) *For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* Acts ii. 23;
iii. 18.

For to do, or be the means of doing that—of causing the
crucifixion of Christ—by which He became the sacrifice to
put away the sins of the world, and so to procure the re-
demption of mankind.³ This was the effect of the act of
the Jewish people, though that fruit and effect they were
wholly ignorant of. In their blindness and sinfulness they Lorinus.
yet did *whatsoever*, just so much and no more than, God had
determined before to be done. God decreed the salvation of Stier.
the world by the passion and death of Christ; He did not

¹ "ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, which has been excluded from the text on account of its apparent redundancy, answers to πρὸς Σιών ὁδὸς τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ, Ps. ii."—Alford. It is omitted in rec., with P rel Thl: inserted A B D E S ed eg ko 13 vss. (int al. Syr. utr. Grp. Copt. Æth. Arm. Slav. 6, 7, et Vulg. It.) Chr. Cyr. Cosm. Iren. Tert Lucif Hil. —Griesbach and Alford.

² "L'humanité sainte est ointe de Dieu même et consacrée par son union substantielle avec le Verbe et la Divinité; le Chrétien est oint et consacré par une union de grace et par la participation de son Esprit."—Quesnel.

³ "Dieu exécute ses desseins par ceux mêmes qui s'y opposent, sur tout par les oppositions des puissans du monde."—Huré.

decree the means—man's sin—by which it was brought about; and in determining the death of Christ as the means of life to sinful man He in no ways guided or impelled the Jews to that death, though He did over-rule their malice to work that salvation which He had before decreed.¹

Estius.

To do whatsoever thy hand . . . determined to be done. In Holy Scripture Hand—the Hand of God—implies—

Corn. & Lap.

(1) Power. This was displayed in the work of our redemption and deliverance from slavery to Satan—the strong man; and this deliverance was effected by the suffering and death of Christ, in which the great power of God was displayed.

Luke xi. 21.

Chrysostom.

(2) It sometimes means Providence, or direction. It was not the rage and malice of the Jews against Christ by which the redemption of mankind was procured, but rage and malice overruled by the Providence of God.

Æcumenius.

(3) Operation. God, by the passion and death of Christ has wrought our redemption, and has established His Church as the channel of salvation to man.

Corn. & Lap.

(4) It includes in its meaning mercy and grace. The work of our salvation from sin and Satan was wrought through the mercy and love which God bears towards us.

Job xxvii. 11.

(5) In Holy Scripture, again, *Hand* means not power merely, but wisdom. Thus, *I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.* Again, *By the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding.* So when Nehemiah is speaking

Ezra viii. 18.

of the wisdom and foresight granted to him for the work of building the city of God, he says, *and the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me.*

Lorinus.

Neh. ii. 8, 18.

These various ideas of power, of Providence, and of direction, of operation, of grace, and of wisdom, enter into the meaning of the word the *hand* of God, and are blended in it. It is not possible to sever the attributes of God even in our thoughts. As His mercy and judgment go together so do His wisdom and power.

Acts iv. 13,
31; ix. 27.

(29) *And now, Lord, behold² their threatenings*

¹ "Non hoc est de necessitate liberatis, quod sit prima causa sui id quod liberum est; sicut nec ad hoc, quod aliquid sit causa alterius, requiritur, quod sit prima causa ejus. Deus igitur est prima causa movens et naturales causas et voluntarias. Et sicut naturalibus causis movendo eas, non aufert quin actus earum sint naturales, ita movendo causas voluntarias non aufert

quin actiones earum sint voluntariæ. Sed potius hoc in eis facit; operatur enim in unoquoque secundum ejus proprietatem."—*Th. Aquinas*, Prima pars qu. 83, Art. 1.

² "*Respice*—Respectus Dei triplex est videlicet secundum cognitionem, secundum gratiam, secundum judicium. De primò: *Omnia*, inquit Apostolus (Heb. iv. 13), *sunt nuda et aperta oculis ejus*

and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

Acts xlii. 46;
xiv. 8; xix.
8; xxvi. 26;
xxviii. 31.
Eph. vi. 19.

As there is here no call for vengeance upon their enemies and the enemies of God's Church, so neither is there any dread of the *threatenings* of man. The only fear—and this marks the humility of the Apostles—is, lest through the *threatenings* of men they themselves should fail, and cease to declare God's truth and will with *boldness*; lest the word of God should be hindered by the fury of sinful men, and the faith be prevented from finding an entrance into the heart of those who desired to escape from their sins by the weakness of those whose duty it was to declare it.

Novarinus.

Fromond.

Dion. Carth.

Their prayer is, *Grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness¹ they may speak Thy word.* As the faithful preaching of God's word in its entirety is of the highest moment to man, and as it is full of difficulty through the hindrances cast in the path of those whose duty it is to declare it, and through the weakness of the preachers themselves, so does it require constant and earnest prayer for God's strengthening and enlightening gifts.

Lorinus.

(30) *By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.*

Acts ii. 43;
iii. 6, 16;
v. 12.

They pray for the exercise of God's power: that He would stretch forth His hand, and this not that He might protect them, not in order that they may be safe from the persecutions of their enemies, least of all that it may enhance their glory, but solely that *the name* of Jesus may be magnified and glorified among men. Here *stretching forth Thine hand* means to exert or make use of Thy power, as in the passage, *About that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church.*

Novarinus

Acts xii. 1.

The prayer of the Apostles includes—

(1) Strength of faith. There is, indeed, no clinging to the cross unless He strengthens us.²

Secundo modo respicit Deus solos justos, quia oculi Domini super justos Ps. xxxiii. 16). Tertius continget in ne, cum judex dicet, nescio vos Matt. xxv. 12).”—Lorinus.

¹ “μετὰ παρρησίας, quod primò, Tyrus vertit, clarè, manifestè, publicè; Secundò, Pagnin. Cum omni audacia. Unde S. Chrysost. ait fideles hinc

poscere animum imperterritum; Tertio, alii, cum omni libertate; Quarto, noster, cum omni fiducia: hæc enim libertatem, audaciam, fortitudinem et constantiam involvit, vel adducit. Qui enim Deo fidit, liber est, audax, intrepidus, et constans.”—Corn. à Lapide.

² “Nemo persistere potest in cruce, nisi Deus det fortitudinem.”—Ferus.

(2) Boldness in making known the truth which they were commissioned to declare. Give, they say, to us boldness in preaching Thy word. If Thou support us and confirm our preaching by the *signs and wonders* which Thou canst work so that at the invocation of the *name of Thy Holy Child Jesus* Thou shalt attest the truth of what we declare, then shall the hearts of those who hear believe in Thee, and shall glorify Thy Son. What is this but to pray in the words of our Lord Himself, *Thy kingdom come*, may Thou be recognized as the only ruler of earth and heaven?

Corn. A Lap.

Ferus.

In using this prayer the Apostles own and teach us to acknowledge that all preaching of man is but vain, all man's labour vain in making known the gospel of Christ, unless God Himself move the heart of man by stretching forth His hand to work that greatest of all miracles, by which the heart of the hearer is disposed to receive and to retain the seed which, if truly sown, is entirely of God's sowing.¹

De Saci.

Acts ii. 2, 4;
xvi. 26.

(31) *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

They prayed that the name of Christ might be glorified, and that His word should not be hindered by the powers of earth, and the sign given in answer to their prayer told them of the might and power of God which exceeds all powers of earth.² They received, however, not only a sign that their prayer was answered, but more than this; the outward sign attested the answer to their prayer, and, as in other dealings of God with man, the outward sign was but the revelation of an inward grace given to the Apostles. Whilst they prayed but for one gift—boldness to declare God's message to man, they received more than they asked in strength, for *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*.

Sanchez.

Ferus.

The place was shaken where they were assembled—a similar, though not the same, sign as that which accompanied the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost. Thus does Ho

Alford.

¹ "Quando inter prædicationem coruscant signa et prodigia, tunc cum omni fiducia et magno fructu, possumus verbum tuum loqui."—*Fromond*.

² "*Trembla*—Pour montrer la puissance de Dieu qui leur était présente, qui peut renverser non seulement les Juifs, mais toute la terre. Pour épou-

vancer aussi leurs ennemis, par ce nouveau tremblement de terre, comme ils l'avaient esté au moment de la resurrection de Jesus Christ lors que l'ange descendit pour dissiper les gardes de son sepulchre et pour remplir de crainte toute la ville de Jerusalem." [Matt. xxviii. 2.]—*Amelote*.

encourage them as He was wont of old time to encourage His faithful servants, as when He sent down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice offered by Elijah, a mark of His acceptance of the offering, and an attestation of the mission of His servant; or as when Solomon had dedicated to God's service the altar and the temple which he had built at Jerusalem, and had prayed to God to accept this offering, *when he had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house*, in token of His presence, so does He mark His approval of the Apostles, and answer their prayer, by shaking the place . . . *where they were assembled*.¹ This shaking of the house by an earthquake was significant:—

1 Kings xviii.
38.

2 Chron. vii.
1.

Ferus.

(1) It was an evident sign given in answer to their prayer.

(2) It assured them of the presence of God, and of His power to shield and protect them when surrounded by a multitude of foes. By it He assured them that the mightiest things of earth are as nothing to Him who could thus shake all things.

(3) It was an encouragement to them in their apostolic labour, an outward mark of God's power that can shake the earthy and stony hearts of men.²

Corn. & Lap.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Perhaps others besides the Apostles, those who had been brought into the Church since the day of Pentecost, now received the gift poured out upon the Apostles and disciples at this time. Whether this were so or not, there was at that time a further outpouring of the Spirit upon those who had before received His gifts. In this fact we are taught that we need again and again to be *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and require a daily increase of grace, fresh strength to overcome fresh temptations, so that it is not sufficient for us once to have re-

Hofmeister.

Bengel.

¹ "Solet Deus signum ostendere voluntatis suæ rebus, sive quæ fiunt, sive quæ postulantur, accommodatum. Ut cum sacrificia absumuntur igne, igne de cælo misso acceptum Deo sacrificium ostenditur: sicut de sacrificio Abel sensit Hieron. lib. de tradit. Heb. in Genesi. Et probat sacrificium Aaron Levit. ix. 24, et Gedeonis Jud. vi. 21, quia fumus et vapor sursum sublati à Domino videntur assumi et Deus dicitur odorari illa, ut dicitur de sacrificio Noë. Cum ergo virtutem ad loquendum cum fiducia fideles à Deo concedi sibi peterent, annuisse se illorum

postulatis declarat Deus terræ concussu, qui Divinæ virtutis signum est. Quo declarat Deus non posse per tenues principum vires Spiritui Sancto, quo tunc iterum repleti sunt discipuli et fideles alii, adversari, quo terræ firmitas tam facile et tanto motu concussa est."—*Sanchez*.

² "*Motus est.* Ad excitandas mentes in quo patet virtus orationis et significatur corda terrena sibi cessura, sub quorum pedibus Spiritu veniente terra concutitur pavore, ut discussa terrenitate discant ad celestia consurgere."—*Hugo de S. Charo*.

ceived this inestimable gift unless by prayer and holiness of life we live near to God, and thus draw down fresh streams of grace to arm us against the wakeful enemies of our soul.

Estius.

They spake the word of God with boldness. Assured of the omnipotence and the omnipresence of God, and of His approval of their ministry by outward token and by inward grace, they show forth to others the reality of that inward gift by proclaiming His word . . with boldness.¹

Lange.

Ferus.

Acts ii. 44; v. 12.

Rom. xv. 5, 6.

2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Phil. i. 27;

ii. 2.

1 Pet. iii. 8.

(32) *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them (οὐδὲ εἷς²) that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*

The sincerity of the faith of the *multitude* of the first believers was made evident to the world around by the abundance of their gifts, and the way in which they ministered of their goods in giving to those who needed. For where faith is, there will be the union of hearts; where the Spirit is not, there is division and every evil work.

Lange.

Calvin.

They were *of one heart*, the wills of all were turned to God, and in God were turned to each other; they were *one* in affection.³ But more than this, they were also *of one soul*, one in thought, and memory, and the exercise of the intellectual faculties. *One* in all things, for they sought to do the one will of God, who is one; desiring in all things His glory, not their own. As at Babel there was confusion in the actions, the language, and the wills of men, so that one could not *understand* the other, so at Jerusalem was given to the Church oneness of speech, of will, and deeds of active love. For Christ came for this end, to *gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad*. To this union of faith, hope, and love we are repeatedly exhorted. Thus the Psalmist says, *Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity.* This oneness of heart and of soul, this unity of the members of Christ, is the witness to the world of the mission of our Lord; according to His prayer, *that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.* For this unity of the members of Christ St. Paul prays, and in praying

Fromond.

Sylveira.

Novarinus.

Gen. xi. 7.

Hugo de S. Charo.

John xi. 52.

P's. cxxxiii. 1.

John xvii. 21.

¹ "*Cum fiducia*—Sunt qui verbum Dei legunt et audiunt sed sine affectu, cum tædio, nec idipsum audent confiteri."—*Ferus*.

² οὐδὲ εἷς, not even one.—*Hackett*.

³ "*Cor unum et anima una*—Unitas cordis similitudinem significat volun-

tatum deliberatarum cor enim pro voluntate ponitur. Unitas autem animæ similitudinem affectionum, prout tamen rationi subduntur, significat, flebant nam cum flentibus et gaudebant cum gaudentibus [Rom. xii. 15]."—*Cajetan*.

points out the source of that unity which we are to strive after. *Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus. That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*¹

Rom. xv. 5, 6.

(33) *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

Acts i. 8, 22; ii. 47.

Not by words only, however mighty and convincing, but by outward tokens of the power of *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus* did the Apostles bear witness to the truths which they proclaimed. By the sanctity of their lives, which was manifest to all men, as well as by miracles, did they witness that Christ had indeed risen from the dead, and had raised them from the death of sin in this life to that life which is eternal—union with Him who is *the Life*.

Lorinus.

Arias. Mont.

Their witness was a *witness of power*, because it was consistent. He witnesses without power who declares the truth which he does not show forth in his life.

Ferus.

They *gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*. The Apostles preached the whole gospel, and dwelt on all the mysteries of the life of Incarnate God. This truth, however, of the resurrection is singled out; since, in fact, it is *the gospel*, that which confirms and sets a seal to all the other truths of redemption, and that which was the hardest for the Jew to believe in, yet the truth without which all preaching is *in vain*.

1 Cor. xv. 1.

Gangæus.

Great grace was upon them all. It cannot be decided by the context whether this means *grace from God was upon them all* to enable them to show forth these signs of brotherly love, and of the power of *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*; or that because of these evident tokens of a superhuman gift, and because of the wondrous acts of charity which marked the actions of the newly-converted, they obtained grace or favour from the people, as we read earlier of the Apostles *praising God, and having favour with all the people.*² The words themselves seem limited to one

Acts ii. 47. Hardouin.

¹ "Observe quod quæ natura non potest, hæc Spiritus Sanctus efficere potest. Vix inter paucos fratres invenies, quod hic inter tam multos dissimiles audis fuisse. Pii idem cor et voluntatem habent etiamsi longis multisque locis ac temporibus sejuncti sint."—Ferus.

² "Per χάρις Beza, Præmus, Heumanus Dei favorem intelligunt, ut Luc. ii. 40; Eph. vi. 24. Bengelius, Dei hominumque favorem. Non possum eo adduci ut assentiar. Etenim ipsa orationis cohærentia coll. v. 34, et locus parallelus 2. 47. sat, evidenter docent, sermonem esse h. l. de favore

Bengel. of these, either grace from God, or grace or favour with the people, though some have understood these words to mean both, as we know from many passages that God was with them, and that at the same time the people highly esteemed them.

Acts ii. 45. (34) *Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, (35) And laid them down at the apostles' feet:*¹ *and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

Acts ii. 45;
v. 2; vi. 1.

To what extent these converts divested themselves of their property is not clear. From many subsequent notices in the book it is clear that the members of the Church still possessed property. Many, doubtless, stripped themselves of all that they had, though it is evident from the narrative in the next chapter that this was not required of any. What, however, is clear is, that in the greatness of their love one towards another, the necessities of the poorest were relieved by those who had more, and that this was done by the sale of *houses* and *lands* freely given up out of that affection which the converts to Christ had for those who were fellow-heirs with them of the promises. We learn also that this distribution was made systematically, not according as each of those who were the *possessors of lands or houses* had given more or less into the common stock, but *according as he who was poor had need.*

Hofmeister.

Bengel.

(36) *And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,²) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,*

populi, quem sibi Apostoli et reliqui Christiani conciliabant amoris mutui concordiaeque studio v. 32, et liberalitate erga inopes coll. v. 34."—*Kuinoel.*

¹ "Statua illa Nabucodonozor aurum in capite habuit, in pedibus terram: nil mirum, si, lapide in pedibus tacta, corruit et tota confracta est; non abiisset in pulverem si aurum habuisset in pedibus. Exitium timeat, qui aurum omnibus praeferat et in capite gestans, aurum cogitans, avaritiae studet. Qui sub pedibus aurum habet, firmus erit, nec facile expositus ruinae."

—*Novarinus.*

² "It is uncertain whence the word Barnabas is derived; and so much the more, because it is uncertain what the word παράκλησις should signify in this place. It is generally interpreted *the son of consolation*. . . It seems probable, to take its original form *נבון*, *to prophesy*; under which word every one knows *exhortation* is comprehended in the first place; and according to this signification of the word παράκλησις we find him behaving himself, chap. xi. 23, παρεκάλες πάντες, κ. τ. λ. *He*

(37) *Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*¹

Acts iv. 34
35; v. 1, 2.

Some have conjectured that Barnabas was the same as we read of in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and who is there spoken of as *Joseph called Barsabas*. This is, however, in the highest degree improbable. In what way, if in any, his sacrifice of *land* and houses differed from that of others is not clear.² He seems most probably to be specifically mentioned at this place, not because his sacrifice was greater than that of other converts, but because of his after companionship in the ministry with St. Paul.³

Hardouin.

The members of the tribe of Levi had no possession with their brethren in the land of Canaan, yet this circumstance did not absolutely prevent their becoming the possessors of houses and lands in Judæa, still less did it hinder their being the holders of property in a foreign country like Cyprus. Indeed, though the tribe of Levi had no corporate possessions like those which the other tribes held, yet the individual members of this tribe appear sometimes to have had landed property. Thus Samuel was born on the land belonging to his great-grandfather Zuph, which seems as though hereditary possessions were held by Levites, though the tribe of Levi had no tribal property. Again, we have an instance of the possession of property by one of this tribe in the case of *Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in the land of Benjamin*. When his uncle Hananeel came and desired him to purchase the *field* which belonged to him, and added, *the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine, buy it for thyself*, he did as he was desired, and with all the formalities of the law purchased the land. So that whether the *land* which Barnabas sold was in Canaan or not, there is no difficulty in the fact that he, though a Levite, had such a possession.

1 Sam. i. 1;
ix. 5.
1 Chron. vi.
33.
Whitby.

Jer. i. 1.

Jer. xxxii. 8.
Lorinus.

We may trace the increasing influence of the gospel and the growth of the Christian Church in this conversion of Barnabas. First we read of the multitude which was added

exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord."
—Lightfoot.

¹ "When a person takes a present or an offering to a priest, to a spiritual guide, or to a distinguished scholar, he does not give it into the *hands* of his superior, but places it at *his feet*. It is called the *pâtha-kâniki*, that is, the 'feet offering.' Ananias

and Sapphira also brought a part of the price of the land, 'and laid it at the apostles' feet.'"—*Roberts' Oriental Illustrations*.

² See on Barnabas, note C at the end of this chapter.

³ "Exempli causa Lucas ex illis possessoribus unum nominat, cujus liberalitati ingenuæ opponit (cap. seq.) fucatam Ananiæ ejusque Sapphiræ."—*Beelen*.

Bengel.
Acts vi. 7.

to the Church—the common people, as it would seem; now we read of the *Levite* who was joined to the Church of Christ; and soon after of a *great company of the priests*, who were obedient unto the faith.

He was called the *Son of Consolation*, either because of the consolation which he had received, or of that which he imparted to others by his teaching and example.¹ Indeed, he must have received that which he gave to others, so that in this word, the *Son of Consolation*, is meant—

John xvii. 12.

(1) He to whom God had given great consolation.² This is the common meaning of *son* in the New Testament, as the *son of perdition* means he who had procured perdition by his conduct. *Children of wrath* are those living under wrath because of their sin; *Children of the light* are those who are now members of Him who is the *Light*, and who will hereafter dwell with Him in light.

Eph. ii. 3.

1 Thess. v. 5.

(2) He who had the special grace of being the minister of *consolation* to others, who encouraged and consoled others in their trials by his confession of Christ.

Dion. Carth.

Hofmeister.

(3) He who by the sale of his *land* ministered to those who needed, and thus brought *consolation* to them in their poverty. Either of these latter reasons may have been the cause why the Apostles surnamed him *Barnabas*, or the *Son of Consolation*.

Well, indeed, was he called the *Son of Consolation* who, stripping himself of worldly possessions, placed his whole trust in the eternal riches, and taught to others that faith which he had laid hold of and shown forth by this act of self-sacrifice in giving up all, that he might go forth to preach Christ.³

Ferus.

¹ "*Filius consolationis*. Per singularem consolationem, quam sua conversione, charitate, sapientia et fluenti eloquio attulit Apostolis et toti novæ Ecclesiæ. Unde consolatio ista magis activa, quam passiva intelligi debet, sicut Jacobus et Joannes vocati sunt filii tonitru, activa significatione, id est tonantes, licet alias, tales hebraicæ phrases, ut, Filius mortis, filius gehennæ, magis soleant passivè quam activè exponi."—*Fromond*.

² "Ubique Scriptura sacra, nomina rerum vel personarum cum interpretatione ponit, sensum utique sacratorem ipsidem inesse significat. Merito

ergo filius consolationis vocatur, qui presentia contemneus, spe futurorum consolatur."—*Bede*.

³ "Les biens de la terre sont bien peu de chose en eux-mêmes; mais on en fait quelque chose de grand, quand on les consacre à Dieu par la charité. Quelle différence entre celui qui n'entre dans le ministre ecclésiastique qu'en se dépouillant de tout pour les pauvres; et ceux qui n'y viennent qu'afin de piller, pour ainsi dire, l'Eglise, de s'enrichir de ses biens et de vivre splendidement aux dépens des pauvres."—*Quesnel*.

Note A.—THE SANHEDRIM.

The Hebrew name of this court כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה is derived from the Greek συνέδριον or συνέδρια, a congress or deliberative assembly. See *Æsch.* *Prom.* 490. This name was given to two distinct courts, and we read of the Great Sanhedrim and the Lesser. The former, which is the one mentioned in this chapter, and styled in the Mishna בֵּית דִּין 'the house of Judgment,' held its sittings at Jerusalem only; the latter might be held in any town, and whilst the latter only took cognizance of smaller offences, the Great Sanhedrim had the right to examine into the truth of the gravest charges, and to review the judgments of any inferior Sanhedrim. In this respect it was a court of final appeal.*

Though the germ of such a court existed from the time when each head of a tribe exercised authority over the tribe to which he belonged, the formal institution of the court took place by Divine appointment during the wanderings of the children of Israel in the desert. In answer to the complaint of Moses, "Wherefore have I not found favour in Thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?" we read that "the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone. . . . And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle" (*Numb.* xi. 11, 16, 17, 24). This council, or court, assisted Moses with its advice, and by hearing causes which hitherto it had been his duty to hear. In the times of the Temple the importance of the Sanhedrim

seems to have diminished. At length, having fallen into disuse, it was restored amongst other reforms which were begun by Jehoshaphat, and after the return from Babylon appears to have increased in power and influence. This council had authority over all crimes against the ecclesiastical and civil rule, though a distinction was preserved between these two classes of offences, and a distinct president appointed over the court, according as it was engaged with a secular or ecclesiastical matter. "Behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord; and Zebediah, the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters" (2 *Chron.* xix. 8—11). How long this distinction between civil and ecclesiastical matters continued is not known. The constitution of the court no doubt suffered considerable changes in lapse of time. It is supposed, however, by Jewish writers that it was preserved during the period of the captivity, and what had suffered decay was renewed by Ezra.

The Sanhedrim consisted of priests and Levites, and of laymen, the elders of the people, and, at least in later times, the President might be either a priest or a layman, chosen from any of the tribes. It was not necessary indeed for the validity of its sentences that any Levite should be present, for it was held by the Rabbins that the Sanhedrim was legitimately constituted, even though no members of the priestly tribe had a seat in it. It cannot, however, be doubted but that the priests or Levites who were present exercised a preponderating influence over the decisions of the court, if not because of their official character, yet on account of their possessing those qualities which were looked for in its members. By Divine law, the members of the Sanhedrim were required to be men of wisdom, of prudence, of justice, imbued with the fear of God, possessed of a love for truth, haters of avarice, and without respect of persons (*Exod.* xviii. 21; *Deut.* i. 13—17). To these moral qualifications the Rabbins added these others:—

(1) That they should be free from any blemish or defect of body.

(2) That they should possess a knowledge of the seventy languages, into which it was popularly held that the speech of that part of mankind was divided, amongst whom the Jews were scattered.

(3) That they should not be so old as to be infirm from age.

(4) That they should not be eunuchs, because these were usually harsh and cruel in their judgments.

(5) That they should be fathers, since fathers are more inclined to mercy than unmarried judges.

(6) That they should be learned in the knowledge of the stars; be astronomers, in order that they might compute the proper times of the feasts, which was one of the proper duties of the Sanhedrim. Some, however, think, though this is unlikely, that by the knowledge of the stars Astrology is meant.

To the seventy members prescribed to Moses was added one other to preside over the court, which then consisted really of seventy-one members, thus representing Moses and the seventy who assisted him. Some suppose that these were chosen six from each tribe, except that of Levi, from which only five were taken. Others suppose that each tribe presented the names of six candidates, and that from the number seventy-two one was rejected by lot. Two scribes, according to the Babylonian Gemara, were present at every session of the court, the one, it is said, to record the acquittal of the accused, the other to record his condemnation. The President of the Sanhedrim, who bore the title of נשיא בכל מקום, the supreme, or universal Prince, commonly abbreviated to נשיא, *Nassi*. The Vice-president, who sat on the right of the President, was called אב בית דין, the Father of the Judgment-hall. The elders, when elected, were appointed to their places by the laying on of hands, a rite prescribed to be done in the presence of five, or at the least of three, members of the Sanhedrim. In course of time this seems to have been disregarded, and

they were sometimes appointed by a formal designation only. At one period it would seem to have been thought necessary that either the President or Vice-president should be a layman; in the confusion of latter years this rule, however, was disregarded, and sometimes both offices were filled by laymen at other times, as at the date of this Pentecost, by members of the priestly family, by Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas. At this period its duties would necessarily be limited almost wholly to ecclesiastical matters.

For a while the meetings of the Sanhedrim were held in one of the inner rooms adjoining the temple, thence it was removed to one of the courts of the temple, and forty years before the final destruction of Jerusalem, on account of the increase of crime, it was held in the city itself (*Avodah Zarah*, fol. 8, 2). After the capture of the city by Titus, it migrated to various places and was finally established at Tiberias, where it came at length to an end. See *The Mishna* sect. iv., also *Lightfoot's Horæ Heb. & Talm.*; *Goodwyn's Moses and Aaron* lib. i. cap. 1, 5; *Corpsorvius in Apparatus Hist. Crit. Antiq. Sacri Codicis*, pp. 551—554; *Leusden in Phil. Heb. Mixtus*, dissert. xlv. *Antiq. Heb. & Conrado Ikenio*, pars ii. cap. 4; *Vorstius and Witsius* in two treatises among those included in *Ugolini's Thesaurus*, vol. xxv., and *Claud. Frassen in Disquisitiones Biblicas*, tom. ii. pars, pp. 278—281.

Note B.—ANNAS THE HIGH PRIEST

Annas, or Ananus, the High Priest is remarkable as the father of five sons Eleazar, Jonathan, Theophilus, Matthias, and Ananias (Acts xxiii. 2) who in succession filled the same office in their father's lifetime (Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 91); and whose son-in-law Caiaphas was also for a time High Priest (John xviii. 13). Annas was made High Priest by Quirinus, the Governor of Syria, A.D. 7, after the battle of Actium (Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 21), and was deposed from this office by Valerius Gratus, Procurator of Judæa, in the second year

of the reign of Tiberius, A.U.C. 779, A.D. 15. He first appointed Ishmael, the son of Phabi, to succeed Annas, but soon displacing him, he gave the office to Eleazar, the son of Annas (Joseph. Antiq. xviii. 2, 2); the year after, however, he deposed Eleazar, and appointed Simon, the son of Camillus, to succeed him. But though the official position of High Priest was sometimes given to members of another family, and was held at other times by various members of his own family, yet Annas appears to have retained the real power, and he is accordingly spoken of as High Priest with Caiaphas (Luke iii. 2), an irregularity which strikingly shows the general disregard of the Mosaic law, which directs that the High Priesthood should be held for life. It was to the palace of Annas that our Blessed Lord was "first" led after his seizure in the garden of Gethsemane, though it was in the house of Caiaphas that "the scribes and elders were assembled" officially to try Jesus (Matt. xxvi. 47). This is particularly noted by St. John, who was personally known to the High Priest, and who for that reason it may be was struck with the fact (John viii. 13).

In what sense Annas is spoken of at this place as the High Priest is uncertain. It may be that the title is given him merely to mark out what Annas is referred to, or that St. Luke follows the custom of his times, and speaks of one who had been High Priest by this title, though he had been removed from this office. This is the practice of Josephus (*Bisbee on the Acts*, chap. iii.). Annas was distinguished as having held the office for upwards of seven years, a fact remarkable in those times of change and confusion, when the Roman authorities set up and put down the High Priests at their pleasure, so that for a while the office became almost an annual one. "Gratus seems to have introduced the practice of conferring the choice within five principal sacerdotal families, probably those best able to pay. These were—1, the house of Phabi; 2, the house of Boethos; 3, the house of Kantheras; 4, the house of

Kamyth; and 5, the house of Anan. . . The general characteristic of four of these houses, and the manner in which they administered the affairs of the temple, is briefly but most strikingly expressed in the Talmud, tract. Pesahim, fol. 57: 'Concerning them and the like of them,' Rabbi Saul said, in the name of Joseph ben Chanin, 'I am grieved at the house of Boethos with its bludgeons; I am grieved at the house of Anan with its secret denunciations; I am grieved at the house of Kantheras with its libels; I am grieved at the house of Phabi with its fists. The high priests appoint their sons treasurers, and their sons-in-law captains of the temple, while their servants ill-use the people and treat it to club-law'" (*Raphael, Post-Biblical History of the Jews*, vol. ii. pp. 569-70).

Annas appears to have been President of the Sanhedrim, and as such, and because of his great influence and power, he is named before Caiaphas, the actual High Priest *de jure*, if not *de facto*. The difficulty which confessedly exists as to the way in which he is to be regarded as High Priest at this time, is one arising not from any inherent obscurity in the passage, but entirely from our inacquaintance with the history of these times. Josephus enumerates twenty-eight high priests from the commencement of the reign of Herod, B.C. 37, to the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70; there is, however, some doubt whether he does not reckon again those who were merely restored to that office. The names as given by him are—

- 1 Ananelus, B.C. 37.
- 2 Aristobulus, B.C. 36.
- 3 Ananelus restored, B.C. 35.
- 4 Jesus, the son of Phabi, B.C. 22.
- 5 Simon, son of Boethus, B.C. 22.
- 6 Matthias, B.C. 5.
- 7 Joazar, son of Simon, B.C. 4.
- 8 Eleazar, brother of Joazar, B.C. 4.
- 9 Jesus, the son of Sieh, B.C. 4.
- 10 Ananus, or Annas, A.D. 7.
- 11 Ishmael, son of Phabi, A.D. 15.
- 12 Eleazar, son of Ananus, A.D. 15.
- 13 Simon Kamyth, A.D. 16.

- 14 Joseph, called Caiaphas, A.D. 17.
 - 15 Jonathan, son of Ananus, A.D. 37.
 - 16 Theophilus, son of Ananus, A.D. 37.
 - 17 Simon Boethus, A.D. 42.
 - 18 Matthias, son of Ananus, A.D. 42.
 - 19 Elionæus Kantheras, A.D. 43.
 - 20 Joseph, son of Camydus, A.D. 45.
 - 21 Ananias, son of Nebadæus, A.D. 47.
 - 22 Ishmael, son of Phabi, A.D. 59.
 - 23 Joseph, A.D. 61.
 - 24 Ananus, fifth son of Ananus the First, A.D. 62.
 - 25 Jesus, son of Damnæus, A.D. 62.
 - 26 Jesus, son of Gamaliel, A.D. 64.
 - 27 Matthias, A.D. 65.
 - 28 Phannias, A.D. 67."
- Josephus, Ant. xx. 10, 5; Selden de Successionibus Pontif. c. xi.*

Note C.—BARNABAS.

בֶּרְנָבָא *Barnabas*, Son of Consolation, or of Prophecy, was a Levite, dwelling in the island of Cyprus, where large numbers of Jews had settled from the time of Antiochus the Great. Barnabas was, according to Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl. i. 12*), an early disciple of Christ; and Clemens Alex. in his *Stromata* (ii.) says that he was one of the seventy disciples sent out by our Lord. The early connection of Cyprus with Tarsus probably made him in his youth the companion of Saul, and on the conversion of the latter, Barnabas re-assured the Apostles, who doubted of the sincerity of the new convert, and introduced him to their company. Having brought Saul from Tarsus to Antioch to assist in the preaching of the gospel, which had been first promulgated in that city by men of Cyprus

and Cyrene, they were both sent to Jerusalem to bring alms for the relief of the Church, in an impending famine. On their return to Antioch they were selected by the Holy Spirit for ordination to the work of the ministry, and were enrolled or reckoned in the Apostolic body. Their first missionary labours were directed to Cyprus and Proconsular Asia. In this journey they were accompanied by John Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, who, however, left them in Pamphylia. On the two Apostles preparing to commence their joint labours, a difference arose as to the propriety of again taking Mark with them, and through the contention on this matter *they parted asunder*. Barnabas and Mark then went again to Cyprus, the native country of the former, probably of both these kinsmen. Alford says, "From the notice (*Acts xv. 40*) that Paul was recommended by the brethren to the grace of God, it would seem that Barnabas was in the wrong." This, however, seems a larger inference than these words will warrant.

Here the Scriptural accounts cease with reference to Barnabas. A doubtful tradition says that he went to Milan and was the first bishop of the Church there, and the Clementine homilies say that he converted Clement of Rome. The Epistle bearing the name of Barnabas is cited as his, both by Clemens Alex. and Origen, as well as by Eusebius (*Hist. Ecc. iii. 25*) and Jerome (*Cat. Script. Ecc. c. 6*); its authenticity, however, is denied by many, though seemingly on insufficient grounds. The *Acta et Passio Barnabæ in Cypro*, which purports to give an account of his second missionary journey in that island, is probably not earlier than the fourth century.

CHAPTER V.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

TIBERIUS.
PONTIUS PILATE.
CAIAPHAS.

(1) *But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife,¹ sold a possession, (2) And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.²* Acts iv. 37.

THIS narrative is continuous with that given in the closing verses of the last chapter, and *Ananias and Sapphira his wife*³ are contrasted with *Joses, surnamed Barnabas*. He sold his land, and laid the money at the Apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need; but a certain man acted otherwise, and sold a piece of land, a single piece (κτῆμα), and then came, and offering a portion of the money, whether a large or small portion matters not, professed to give the whole of the money to the common stock, and so hoped to obtain credit for his love and zeal, or, perhaps, with a secret doubt whether he might not need for his own wants some of the money which he had obtained. If so, his sin was distrust.⁴ If, however, as seems most consistent with the narrative, he and his wife sought credit for giving what they really withheld, thus attempting to serve God and mammon, the sin of these Lange.

¹ "Si dotalis ager erat, utriusque consensus necessarius fuit: si proprius alterius, deuit adesse in utroque consensum."—*Lorinus*.

² "Ut ostenderent pecuniās esse calculandas."—*S. Jerome*.

³ 'Ανανίας, Neh. iii. 8, 23, or חנניא, Jer. xxviii. 1; Dan. i. 6 in LXX., also 1 Chron. iii. 21, al. = the cloud of God or the mercy of God. Σαφείρη,

perhaps from the Greek σάφειρος, sapphire, or from שפיר, as in Ps. xvi. 6, in the Syriac, with י inserted שפירא, beautiful.—*Grotius*.

⁴ "Qui Deo diffidit, magnam ei contumeliam facit. Deum enim mendacium constituit, de ejus verbo dubitat, quo non semel promisit se daturum nobis necessaria: denique bonitati ejus diffidit toties expertus."—*Ferus*.

Whitby.
Meyer.

Josh. vii. 11.
Bengel.

Olshausen.

Matt. xiii. 26.

two was not dissimilar from that of Achan in appropriating to his own private use a portion of the spoil which had been set aside for the Lord. These by their own act had appropriated their *possession* to the use of the Church of God, and then ventured into the presence of the Apostles professing to give the whole, through offering only a certain part. There may have been vanity in selling and offering, there was hypocrisy in their professions of self-sacrifice.¹

Thus has it ever been in the Church, as our Blessed Lord Himself foretold, *when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also*, the sowing of the Evil One.

Gen. iii. 3.

Numb. xvi.
7—35.

Numb. xv.
32—36.
Sanchez.

Num. xxx. 2.
Deut. xxiii.
21.
Eccles. v. 4.
Luke xx. 3.

We have in this history an example of God's dealings with sinners, and the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira is written as a warning to ourselves. In the instance of the punishment visited on new forms of sin we see how severely God will hereafter judge sinners, and the way in which He inflicts temporal punishment is a type of more enduring punishment for sin. Thus those who broke His law in Paradise when He did but forbid them to eat of the fruit of one tree, is an example of the consequences of breaking His laws, and an instance of the way in which spiritual death comes to the soul. They who put unhallowed fire upon His altar were punished by fire to teach us how He will hereafter punish like offences; and he who, gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, was punished with death, is an example of the spiritual penalties which will fall on the heads of those who break His laws, and set at nought His ordinances.

(3) *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost,² and to keep back part of the price of the land?*

Hofmeister.

Though Peter knew by revelation from God, as Elisha knew of the fraud of Gehazi, and to his lie answered, *Went not mine heart with thee when the man turned again from*

¹ "Posuit ad pedes Apostolorum.—Vide quid ambitio facit. Pudet Ananiam non haberi unum ex optimis. Quamvis ergo pecuniæ sit cupidus, ut sibi famam acquirat inter homines, facultatum suarum parte se privat. Interea non cogitat se in Dei conspectu mentiri ac fallere, et Deum hujus mendacii fore ultorem. Ita fit, ut pedes Apostolorum magis honoret, quam Dei oculos. Quo magis cavendum est ne in rectè agendo theatri plausum appetamus, nec vero

frustra admonet Christus utile esse, quum damus eleemosynam, nescire manum sinistram quid faciat dextra." —Calvin.

² "ψεύσασθαι σε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον—Ut ψεύδεσθαι cum Dat. com. seq. est *Mentiri alicui*, ita cum Accus. h.l. est *mentiendo fallere aliquem*. Unde Castalio, optimus Interpres: *Ut Sanctum Spiritum falleres.*" —Jo. Albert Obs. Philol.

his chariot to meet thee? yet to give Ananias an opportunity for the confession of his sins and repentance, he put this question to him: *Why?*—in this implying that Ananias had the power of resistance against the suggestions of Satan—*Why* has there been no resistance? *why* hast thou yielded to the temptations of the Evil One? In this does the Apostle declare the freedom of man's will. It is not merely *why* has Satan tempted you, for there is no sin in being tempted, but why has he overcome you, why has he *filled thine heart?* The question is a twofold one. *Why hath Satan filled thine heart?*—

2 Kings v. 26

Bengel.

Novarinus.

(1) Why has he overcome you by his temptation, and driven you into this sin, and—

(2) What lust, what sin, hast thou hidden in thine heart, be it of vanity or of avarice, by which thou hast encouraged Satan to tempt thee to this greater sin?

Corn. à Lap.

There is no one whose heart Satan does not wound by his temptations, but to be *filled* with him implied the highest degree of wickedness, as though the sinner had given up himself wholly to the Evil One, and had driven God from his heart.

Bengel.

Calvin.

Here it may be asked, Why is it that St. Peter charges Ananias with lying *to*, or with attempting to deceive, *the Holy Ghost*, rather than with lying to the Father or to the Son? He seems to do so—

(1) Because the Spirit is the Comforter and Instructor who has been promised to the Church in the absence of Christ.

(2) Because in what he did he was tempting, or trying to deceive, the Holy Spirit which had been given to him.

(3) Because all lies and deceptions in religious matters are a special offence against Him who is *the Spirit of Truth*.¹

Corn. à Lap.

John xiv. 13.

(4) *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*

It is evident from these words of St. Peter that in the Church at Jerusalem the retaining the possession of lands and of houses, or of selling them and distributing them to

¹ "The sin consisted—1. In hypocrisy, pretending to give more than he did.

"2. In the remnant of a worldly distrustful mind, that could not trust God with all.

"3. In blasphemy against the Holy Ghost implied, as if He knew not the heart.

"4. In reserving what he pretended to devote, which was a kind of sacrilege."—*Baxter*.

Bengel. the poor, according to their needs, was entirely optional. It was their own to retain, and when they had disposed of their property they were free to do what they willed with the proceeds of the sale.¹

Lorinus. *Thou hast not lied to men* only in what you have done, not against us who are but the ministers, the servants of God, *but unto God*; for, as is true of all sin, offences against men are also sin against God, who is the Source of all human authority. In the words which go before, St. Peter had told Ananias that what he had done was a *lie to the Holy Ghost*, here he says that such lie was a lie unto God, therefore it is as clear as words can make it that the Holy Ghost is God.

Bengel. *Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?* Why, that is, hast thou opened thine heart to Satan by conceiving this wickedness, and so inviting him to enter in and fill thine heart? *Thou hast conceived it*, he says, for Satan is only present to fill the heart where sin already exists, and when the will of man has rendered him subject to the Evil One. Let us remember this truth: The devil may influence and tempt man to sin—he cannot compel him to sin. The reception and indulgence of evil require the free consent of the will in man.²

(5) *And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.* (6) *And the young men*³ *arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.*

John xix. 40.

In this we have a demonstration of the invisible judgment, which without any such open manifestation of God's wrath

¹ "*τὸ venditus*, potest primò accipi materialiter pro re vendita. q. d. Res vendita, putà ager, antequam eum venderes, erat in tua potestate. q. d. Nemo coëgit te ut agrum venderes: poteris eum tibi servare: cur ergo eum vendidisti, ejusque pretium Deo vovisti, cum ejus pretium majori ex parte tibi contra votum reservare velles? Secundò, *τὸ venditus*, accipi potest formaliter; sed tunc ager metonymicè sumitur pro pretio agri. q. d. Pretium agri à te venditi erat in tua potestate, scilicet antequam illud Deo voveres et offerres. Cur ergo illud Deo vovisti et obtulisti, cum ejus partem fraudare

et surripere cogitares?" — *Corn. à Lapide*.

² "Dieu ne demande pas nos biens, mais nôtre cœur. Tout hypocrite est-il moins coupable qu'Ananie? Le fond de nôtre cœur est-il moins qu'un fonds de terre? C'est un malheur à celui qui fait semblant de le consacrer à Dieu et le consacre en secret à la cupidité: c'est un larcin et un mensonge à l'égard de Dieu même.—C'est vouloir tromper Dieu, que de vouloir tromper l'Eglise et ses ministres, en qu'il reside par son Esprit ou par son autorité." — *Quesnel*.

³ See note A at the end of this chapter.

against similar sins will rest upon hypocrites and covetous men like Ananias. In order that we might know the hidden power of the Spirit over the hearts and souls of men, God accompanied His answer to the prayer of the Apostles by an external sign; so in order that we may know His hatred against sin, God here manifests by an external sign the punishment which awaits those who with lies and in hypocrisy commit sacrilege, and take to their own use that which they or others have devoted to His service.¹

Some have objected to this passage, as though Peter of His own mind had slain this sinner, but this is not so. Peter did but predict what would happen to Ananias, he did not sentence him to death because of his fraud. It was not Peter's act, but God's; as the miracle of healing the lame man was not wrought by the power of Peter, but was the direct interposition of God. Whether this death was due immediately to the terror which the revelation of his sin struck to the heart of Ananias or no, it is at least clear that his death, and the death of his wife Sapphira afterwards, was not the act of the Apostles, but of God Himself. That it was so esteemed is evident from this circumstance, that it was never made an accusation against the Apostles of Christ that they had caused the death of these two.²

(7) *And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.* (8) *And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.*

She had *three hours* granted her for repentance, yet she came, and came of her own accord, into the company assembled with the Apostles to re-iterate the lie uttered by her husband. *Tell me*, said St. Peter, giving her, as he had given her husband, an opportunity for the acknowledgment

¹ "Hinc discant testamentorum ex-
cutores, quàm studiosè pia legata
exequi, nec ea in suos vel profanos
usus avertere debeant: Deus enim
injurijs sacrilegii acerrimus est vindex."
— *Corn. à Lapide*.

² "Apostolus Petrus nequaquam im-
precatur eis mortem, ut stultus Porphy-
rius calumniatur, sed Dei judicium
prophetico Spiritu annunciat ut pœna
duorum hominum sit doctrina mul-

torum." — *S. Jerom. in Epist. ad
Demetriadem*. "Non magica arte id
fecit Petrus ut fingit Porphyrius sed ex
Spiritu Sancto locutus est et angelo
Dei transgressorem intus cædente ex-
tinctus est impius." — *Dion. Carth.*
"Fuit mors Ananiæ plaga à Deo in-
flicta. Vox Petri fuit tantùm occasio
et causa instrumentalis occisionis, eaque
non physica sed moralis." — *Corn. à
Lapide*.

of her sin, *Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And yet, neither urged by her husband, of whose death she knew not, nor surprised into a lie, she makes the same assertion as Ananias had made, and thus proved that she fully shared in his sin. And she said, yea, for so much.*

Calvin.

Matt. iv. 7.

(9) *Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet¹ of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.*

It must be borne in mind that only the heads of the discourse, an abbreviation of what Peter said, is inserted here. It may be that Peter in direct words afforded Sapphira an opportunity of confessing her sin, and of making restitution of what she had kept back, which, however, she did not do because her heart was hardened, so that she repeats the untruth which she had agreed with her husband to utter.

Sanchez.

Alford.

Calvin.

How is it, the Apostle asks, that ye have agreed together to tempt or try the omniscience of the Spirit of the Lord, as though He knew not the secrets of the heart, and was not the Ruler by whom the Church of God was governed?

(10) *Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. (11) And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

Acts ii. 43;
xix. 17.

Bengel.

We read now of the Church as a constituted body, separate from the rest of the Jews, though the members of it still frequented the temple, and joined in its worship.

Fromond.

The death of Ananias and Sapphira was the cause of great fear, not only upon all the Church, not only upon believers, but also upon unbelievers,² upon as many as heard of this judgment: and the warning extended beyond the sphere of those who witnessed their deaths; it struck

¹ "Est mos Hebræorum, quem et scriptores Nov. Test. secuti sunt, homines exprimere per partes corporis, quarum qualiscunque conjunctio sit cum ea re, quæ iis tribuitur idque quum faciunt, totam personam constituentur, non cogitantes de istis parti- bus. Vid. Ernesti Prolus. de vestigiis

linguæ ebrææ in lingua græca."—Rosenmüller.

² "Les yeux de la chair sont surpris de voir tomber mort le corps d'un pecheur; combien plus le doivent être les yeux de la foi, de voir une ame tomber morte devant Dieu au moment qu'elle peche!"—Queesnel.

ror also into the hearts of those who *heard* tell of *these things*. In this fact consists its force as a warning; there *Stier.*
 ll on all a *fear*, restraining them from the like sin of at-
 mpting to deceive God. It is *By mercy and truth iniquity* *Dion. Carth.*
purged, and by the fear of the Lord that men depart from *Prov. xvi. 6.*
iniquity.

They who heard of the death of Ananias and Sapphira
 ared; let us also *fear*, since, equally with those who lived
 the same time, we have *heard* of this terrible judgment *Ferus.*
 hich fell on them for their sin against the Holy Ghost.¹

(12) *And by the hands of the apostles were² many* *Acts ii. 43;*
signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and *xiv. 3; xix.*
they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. *11.*
Rom. xv. 19.
2 Cor. xii. 12.
Heb. ii. 4.
[Epistle for
St. Bartholo-
mew's Day,
12—16.]

These words follow immediately upon the history of the
 eaths of Ananias and Sapphira his wife, on account of
 hich judgment we are told *great fear came upon all the* *Acts v. 11.*
church and upon as many as heard these things. In this was
 e severity of God manifested; in the *signs and wonders*
wrought by the hands of the apostles of Christ, a testimony
 as afforded to the Church and to the multitudes without
 the love and mercy of God. In the one His stern sever-
 y to hypocrites was evidenced; in the *many signs and won-*
ders, in which multitudes of the sick were healed, was the
 eatness of His love shown to men. These two—the
 stice and the love of God—are to be borne equally in *Lange.*
 ind by all His children.

These *signs and wonders* were wrought *by the hands of the*
apostles, that is,

(1) By the power exerted and manifested through (δὲ)
 e Apostles.

(2) By the laying on of *the hands of the apostles*, in visible
 ken that it was through them immediately that the
 iracles of God's mercy were wrought.³ And these *signs*
and wonders were wrought *among the people*, not upon the *Dion. Carth.*
 lers of the people, for they persecuted Christ in the per-

"Under the most joyful tidings of
 e, mercy, and salvation, God seeth
 t some fear is needful. . . Yet
 ese judgments, frightening away hy-
 crites, hindered not the increase of the
 urch; but the powerful works of the
 ly Ghost, external and internal, con-
 tained multitudes of both sexes."—
exter.

ἐγίνετο — "Erant, convenire et
 sari solebant."—*Patritius.*

³ "Per manus autem Apostolorum—
 Hoc est per Apostolus quasi per instru-
 menta thaumaturga omnipotentiae Dei,
 manus enim est organum organorum,
 ait Aristot. Lib. de Partibus Animal.
 Adde, revera multa miracula facta esse
 per manus, puta benedictione, exten-
 sione, elevatione vel contactu manum,
 uti Petrus manu elevans claudum, eum
 sanitati restituit. Conf. cap. iii. 7."—
Corn. d Lapide.

Cajetan. son of His members, for of these but few, as Nicodemus who at the first came to Him by night, and Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Him, and it may be some others from amongst the rulers of the people, and they only in secret acknowledged Christ to be the long-expected Messiah.

Lyra. *They were all with one accord.* This unanimity of heart and of outward actions is dwelt upon by St. Luke, for this unity was an evidence to the world of the power of God in the hearts of His followers. *All*, that is, as some understand the word, *the apostles* just spoken of, or, as others interpret the word, *all* who had been received into the fold and Church of Christ. *All* these, whether apostles only or the whole body of the faithful, met *with one accord in Solomon's porch*. Their numbers had so greatly increased that the *upper chamber* in which at the first they had assembled could no longer contain them, and they met in the *porch* of the temple, openly and in safety, for at this moment the rulers of the Jews appear to have been undecided as to their treatment of the followers of Him whom they had just crucified, so that none hindered their assembling in this public place, which was for a time the usual resort of the Christians,¹ a place, it may be, endeared to them by the fact that here their Lord had *walked*, and here had taught the *people*, showing that He was indeed *the Son of God*.

Lyra. Ferus. Alford.

Gloss. Ordin.

Chrysostom.

Corn. & Lap.

Cook.

John x. 23.

John x. 36.

John ix. 22;
xii. 42; xix.
38.
Acts ii. 47;
iv. 21.

(13) *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them : but the people magnified them.*

Lightfoot.
Alford.

Corn. & Lap.

A question here arises as to who are meant by *the rest* (τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν). Some understand these words to mean that *the rest* of the disciples, awed and astonished at the display of power exerted by St. Peter in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and by the whole body of the Apostles in the *many signs and wonders wrought* by them, shrunk from joining themselves to them, so as to place themselves upon an equality with them. This, however, is hardly consistent with the whole narrative, and with the history of Christ's Church at this early date. Others understand these words to declare that the wonders, whether of judgment or of mercy, wrought by means of the Apostles, so greatly terrified

¹ "In porticu Salomonis, quæ sic dicitur, non quia à Salomone ædificata erat, sed quia in eodem loco et eodem modo constructa erat, quo antea porticus Salomonis: unde nomen porticûs Salomonis retinuit, posita erat ad Aus-

trum templi."—Lienard.

It was, however, regarded as a relic of the old temple, and may have been really a part of the edifice built by Solomon. *Dollinger's First Age of the Church.* See note at chap. iii. v. 11.

the multitude, that they durst not join themselves to the company of the followers of Christ, as deeming themselves unworthy of admission to the society of those amongst whom such mighty works were done, just as St. Peter when he witnessed the power of Christ in the miracle of the miraculous draught of fishes, and had revealed to him in this act the immeasurable distance between his sinfulness and the sinlessness of Christ, was influenced by this sudden access of knowledge to exclaim, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*¹

Olshausen.

Hofmeister.
Lienard.

Luke v. 8.

This miracle of judgment, the death of Ananias and Sapphira, did its allotted work. It kept back unreal, unearnest converts, and hindered them from coming into the Church of God. Not a crowd of outside worshippers, not a thoughtless and excited multitude thronging His courts, is pleasing to the Lord, but those who worship Him in holiness and with earnest faith and real obedience of heart.

Lange.

(14) *And believers were the more added² to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*)

Hypocrites were deterred from joining themselves to the people of the Lord from fear lest they should incur the punishment with which God had visited the sin of Ananias and Sapphira: the unearnest were prevented from swelling the number of the nominal followers of Christ through terror of the people, and from fear of the secular magistrates, who had already threatened the Apostles and had commanded them to *speak henceforth to no man in the name of Christ.*³

Menochius.

Acts iv. 17.

"Lightfoot supposes that by *the* are meant the remainder of the disciples of whom Ananias had been one; and that they feared to put themselves on an equality with the disciples. But this interpretation seems very far-fetched. Kuinoel supposes by *the rest* are meant those who not already joined with the apostles, whether Christians or Jews, and that they were deterred by the fate of Ananias. Prisseus, Morus, Rosenmüller, Gieseler, and others suppose that by *the rest* are meant the rich men, or the persons in authority and influence among the Jews, of whom Ananias was one, and that they were deterred from it by the fate of Ananias. This is by far the most probable opinion, because—(1) there is an evident contrast between the rich and the people: *the rest*, i.e. the

others of the rich and great, feared to join with them, *but the people*, the common people, *magnified them*. (2) The fate of Ananias was fitted to have this effect on the rich and great. (3) Similar instances had occurred before, that the great, though they believed on Jesus, yet were afraid to come forth publicly and profess Him before men. See John xii. 42, 43; v. 44."—Barnes.

² "But so much *the more* were true believers *added*, because unbelievers kept at a distance."—Wesley.

³ "Nemo audebat se iis inserere, se apostolum profiteri aut apostolis familiarum, partim metu magistratum, partim ex admiratione et reverentia apostolorum, quod ad eorum dignitatem et virtutem se assurgere posse diffiderent."—Menochius.

These judgments, however, which frightened the hypocrites, and the impending persecutions which alarmed the unearnest, hindered not the increase of the Church and of the number of the *believers*. *Multitudes both of men and women* flocked into the fold of Christ, converted at the sight of the *wonders* done by the hands, or instrumentality, of the Apostles of Christ, and prepared to endure all suffering and reproach for His name.

Baxter.

Matt. ix. 21;
xiv. 36.
Acts xix. 12.

(15) *Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter¹ passing by might overshadow some of them.*

Lorinus.

Winer.

The large number of the converts, or at least of those who believed in the miraculous power of the Apostles, is shown in this, that they were unable to bring the sick into any house, they brought them forth and laid them along the line of the street, that so, at the passing of the Apostles, they might be healed. In this, again, we see that *the signs and wonders wrought by the hands of the apostles* were not done in a corner, but openly, and in the presence of the multitude, who were able to test the reality of the cures which were wrought in *the streets*. And these sick were of all conditions, rich and poor, for this is implied in the distinction made between the *beds* and the *couches* on which they were brought for cure, the κλίνη of the rich, and the κράββατος of the poorer patient.²

Wordsworth.

Corn. à Lap.
Bengel.

Lange.

Grotius.

Though it is not positively said that those who believed in the efficacy of the shadow of Peter were healed, yet this is implied in these words. They came in sincere faith, believing in His power whom Peter preached; and as when the woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of Christ's garment and was made whole of her infirmities, so now, in answer to the same faith, were those healed on whom the shadow of Peter fell, as the Apostle passed by. Their faith seems to have been greater than that of those who came to Christ in the days of His incarnate life, and in

¹ "Sic S. Vincentius Fererius serm. in Parasceve ait, quosdam censere ideum unum dumtaxat latronem, qui à dextris erat Christi crucifixi, fuisse conversum, quia ipsum solum tangebatur umbra Christi crucifixi."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

² Κλίνη—this word denotes usually the soft and valuable beds on which the rich commonly lay; κράββατος, the coarse and hard couches on which the

poor used to lie, Mark ii. 4, 9, 11; vi. 55; John v. 8, 12; Acts ix. 33. See Kuinoel in this place. "Instead of κλινῶν, many read κλινάριων, *little beds*, with reference to their portable size. We may adopt that reading, and yet distinguish the terms as before; for these couches need not have been larger than the others in order to be more valuable."—*Hackett*.

answer to that greater faith, He gave to His Apostles power, according to His own words, to do *greater works* than those which He had wrought in answer to the feeble faith of those who came to Him.¹ John xiv. 12.
Chrysostom.

As the shadow cast from the body of Peter healed, so does the lightest action of our lives, the mere shadow which we fling on those within our influence, heal or corrupt those in whom it falls.

(16) *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.* Mark xvi. 17,
18.
John xiv. 12.

Them that were vexed with unclean spirits, that is, not merely tempted by those evil spirits which prompt men to deeds of impurity and to sensual sins, but by all evil spirits; for as the Spirit of God is called the Holy or chaste Spirit, so the spirit of evil is called in Holy Scripture the unclean spirit, since all sin makes the sinner unclean—morally corrupt—and every act of sin renders him unrighteous in the sight of the all Holy God.² Cook.
Lorinus.
[End of
Epistle for St.
Bartholomew
day.]

(17) *Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, (18) And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.* Acts iv. 1,2,6.
Luke xxi. 12.

The high priest was either Caiaphas, the legal high priest, or Annas his father-in-law, who was called *the high priest* from having long held the office, and still possessing the great power which belonged to the high priesthood. The general supposition is that Annas is meant. It is not said Lienard.

¹ "Mirabilis Deus in Sanctis suis, qui edit virtutem et fortitudinem tantam apostolis, potissimè Petro, qui fuit in miraculis privilegiatus, quoniam princeps erat apostolici agminis, sicut Paulus in sapientiæ dono. Propter quod Petrus ad prædicandum Judæis specialiter missus est, Paulus verò ad Græcos. Nam Judæi signa, Græci sapientiam quærunt (1 Cor. i. 22). Unde et Paulus testatur, qui operatus est Petro in circumcisionem operatus est mihi inter gentes (Gal. ii.

8). Et ut dicunt expositores, Petrus majora fecit miracula quam Christus: nec hoc derogat Christi, quia non sua, sed Christi virtute Petrus operatus est ea (John xiv. 12)."—*Dion. Carth.*

² "ἀκάθαρα πνεύματα, nescio dicaturne id moraliter an physice? *Moraliter*: tum immundus est pravus, malus. Esset ergo malignus dæmon, quippe qui nocere hominibus studeret. *Physice* immundus: qui in terris squalidis desertis commorari soleret."—*Morus.*

Jewish A. t.
xx. 9, § 1.

Tirinus.

Cook.

Alford.

Amelote.

Corn. & Lap.

Chrysostom.

that Annas was of *the sect of the Sadducees*. Josephus, however, tells us that his son Annas, or Ananus the younger, who was afterwards high priest, was of this sect,¹ and as the Sadducees then possessed great power, and held many offices in the state, it is not improbable that Annas the elder was himself a Sadducee. The members of this sect were bitter and zealous against the Apostles, because their whole teaching centred around the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead; and, as usual, believing little themselves, they were the more indignant against those who did believe. They were also great sticklers for the law, and remarkable for their severity against those who broke it. *All they that were with him* does not mean the whole Sanhedrim, but only his friends and partisans in the Sanhedrim, at that time divided into two parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

In the fact that the Sadducees then possessed great power in the Sanhedrim we may judge how deeply the nation had sunk in unbelief. Those in chief power, and those who put Christ to death, denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and of the immortality of the soul.

They were filled with indignation, or zeal (*ζήλον*). There was zeal for the sect, and for the opinions which were held by the sect, and this *filled* them *with indignation* at the Apostles. The Apostles, on the other hand, were also *filled* with zeal to fulfil the commands of their Master in declaring the gospel of the resurrection, and the apostolic zeal being born of heaven, and directed to the things of heaven, was in the end victorious over the earth-born and perverse zeal of the Sadducees.

The indignation and zeal which *filled* the high priest and his adherents is expressed in the words he *rose up*. Suddenly aroused, as it would seem, by the growing popularity of the Apostles, and by the power of the miracles wrought by their instrumentality, he and the Sadducees *that were with him* prepared to assault the Apostles more vigorously, and to stay the consequences of their teaching.² *They laid their hands on the apostles*—not only on Peter and John, but, as it appears, on the rest of the Apostles also. Hence we read

¹ See note B at the end of the fourth chapter.

² “*Ἀναστὰς δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς*—Surge hic non est ex sede sese erigere corporaliter, sed est excitare seipsum ad aliquid audendum. Terror et splendor miraculorum in Anania et aliis, ab Apostolis editorum, ita dejecerant ipsorum animos, ut non au-

derent adoriri Apostolos et Ecclesiam. Sed ubi memoria horum miraculorum paululum decrevit, et invidia denovo stimulare cepit intus, excitarunt sese ad audendum quod antea non audebant.”—*Streso*.

“Sensus est: Tum cœpit Pontifex Max. cum omni comitatu suo vehementer indignari.”—*Rosenmüller*.

soon after, when again summoned before the Sanhedrim to account for their persistence in teaching, notwithstanding they had been cast into prison, that *Peter and the other apostles answered.* Fromond.

And put them in the common prison. Peter and John had before been cast probably into the private prison of the Sanhedrim, where they were detained because it was too late in the day for a legal session of the Sanhedrim. Now it is the public prison, the place where thieves and outcasts were kept,—a proof of the growth of the indignation of the Sadducees.¹ Lyra.

Their malevolence; however, only gave increased evidence of the miracle which was wrought for their deliverance, as the guard and the sealing of the tomb made the resurrection of Christ more wonderful and better attested than it otherwise might have been. Thus does the blind malice of man work out the greater glory of God. Wordsworth.

(19) *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,* Acts xii. 7; xvi. 26.
 (20) *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.* John vi. 63; xvii. 3.
 1 John v. 11.

It is most likely that the Apostles were seized and thrown into prison, as before, in the evening, since otherwise, according to Jewish law, they ought to have been examined and condemned or acquitted on the same day.² *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and enabled them to pass through the midst of the guards standing without, as Christ Himself, when the people of Nazareth would have cast Him down headlong from the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, passing through the midst of them, went His way.* It is when the night is darkest, when afflictions seem insurmountable, and there is no earthly means by which help can be afforded, that God most reveals His presence and manifests His power.³ Salmeron.

¹ "Publicæ custodiæ adjiçuntur, ut publici malefactores haberentur. Græcè vocatur hoc loco τήρησις δημοσία, custodia popularis. Nobiles in carcere secreto, atque adeò honoratiore ponebantur: Apostoli, tanquam ignobiles, in popularem carcerem ad majorem contemptum trudentur; sed ignobilis carcer dum justos retinuit, nobilis evasit."—Novarinus.

² "Sub vesperam videntur Apostoli conjecti in carcerem, sicut et paulò antè dixit de Petro et Joanne; ut videas

illos non ausos fuisse in meridiana luce Apostolos comprehendere, quòd timerent sibi à populo. Ita Dominus nocte comprehensus fuit: nam *omnis qui malè agit, odit lucem et non venit ad lucem ut non arguantur opera ejus* [Ioan. iii. 20]."—Salmeron.

³ "Angelus Domini per noctem januas aperuit, cur non per diem? Ut clam et sine strepitu id præstaret neve ab hominibus videretur. Nimirum qui nullo inanis gloriæ affectu tactus, nullà humanæ laudis prurigine affectus aliis

Luke iv. 29, 30.

Corn. & Lap.

It was *by night* that the Angel of the Lord came and opened the prison doors. We see the effect of God's hand, not the means by which He works, we see enough to convince us of His power and the watchfulness of His eye, yet faith is still needed to enable us to trace His power shown in the miracles which He works. And this miracle was significant in a spiritual sense. They whom their Master commissioned and sent forth to break the fetters of sin from off the souls of men, were taught the power of His presence by the removal of the material fetters, and were delivered from the material prison that they might set free those who were imprisoned and bound in the prison-house of their lusts.

Chrysostom.

Hardouin.

Fromond.

Novarinus

Hofmeister.

Sylveira.

Dion. Carth.
John xiv. 6.Lienard.
Grotius.
Menochius.

Lightfoot.

Go stand—fearless, without dread of man.¹ Their prison was to the Apostles but the school in which they were strengthened and prepared for boldly preaching God's word, since they who suffer for Christ learn by their very sufferings how best to proclaim Him to others. *And speak . . . to the people*, not, as some have noted, to the people in distinction from the priests and Pharisees, for the command is a general one, but to every one who will hear, for Christ Himself was sent to visit and to redeem *His people*, that is, He was sent to the whole nation. And the Apostles were bidden to speak *all the words of this life*, that is—

(1) All the facts of the Incarnate life of God, all the truths of Christ dwelling on earth, all the words of Him who is *the way, and the truth, and the life*.

(2) The doctrine, or gospel, which leads to spiritual life, in which we are sanctified by grace here, and are made meet for the life to come—that whole life which we call the Christian life.

(3) The gospel of the resurrection life flowing from the fact of our Lord's resurrection. This was the great offence which the Apostles committed in the eyes of the Sadducees, that they were continually putting forth this fact as the motive for repentance and for watchfulness.²

prodest, Angelum referre videtur: qui hominum laudes quærit, in die, cunctis videntibus, miseris opem fert; quod à malo Angelo est. Qui humanæ laudis lucem fugit, Angelum refert.”—*Novarinus*.

¹ “*Ite et stantes*. Stare constantiæ verbum est, ad quam animantur ab Angelo, non habitus situsve corporis. Denotat etiam animi contra adversarios alacritatem et impetum, et militarem veluti in statione perseverantiam.”—*Lorinus*.

² “*πάντα τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης* per hypallagen dictum esse videtur, pro: *πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα τῆς ζωῆς*. Doctrinæ felicitatis sunt doctrinæ quibus monstratur via ad veram felicitatem.”—*Rosenmüller*, so also *Winer, Bengel, Kuinoel*. “*Verba vitæ* hic omnino sunt ea, quæ viam at salutem æternam commonstrarant.”—*Wolfius*. “*Verba vitæ* hujus scilicet Christianæ quæ est in presenti per gratiam et per gloriam in futuro.”—*Lyra*. “Quod Græcis *σωτηρία* dicitur,

It has been captiously asked why this miracle was wrought, since it did not save the Apostles from eventual punishment, and hence some, disregarding all evidence, think it may not have happened because they cannot see the utility of the miracle, as if this were any argument against it having been wrought. How far it was effectual He only who knows the heart can say. We cannot, however, overlook the fact that the miracle was a new sign which ought to have worked conviction in the hearts of the priests and other persecutors of the Church, and that it may have had, and most probably did have, an influence on the hearts of the people, if not on the hearts of the priests. Lange. One effect, however, it must have had—it strengthened and encouraged the Apostles in their preaching, by this proof, that whatever afflictions they were called upon to suffer they would endure for one who was Almighty. Hence the direct effect of the miracle was to make the Apostles rejoice that it was as God's witnesses they suffered, and to reckon it all joy that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. Verse 41.

(21) *And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council¹ together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.* Acts iv. 5, 6.

Early in the morning—at dawn, that is, or day break, a proof of the promptness and eagerness of the Apostles to obey the commands of Him who had released them from prison, and also of the readiness of the people to hear the message which the Apostles proclaimed to men. No sooner did the worshippers come to the temple to join in the morning service there, which was at six o'clock, than they flocked to listen to these new teachers.² Alford. Lorinus. Hofmeister Wolfius.

id Syri ܕܝܝܬܐ vitam appellare solent. Sic Hebr. ii. 3, Paulus ait: *quomodo nos effugiemus, si nullam curam gesserimus τηλικαύτης σωτηρίας tantæ salutis?* pro quo Syrus Interpres posuit, *hujus vitæ*; quod græcè vix aliter exprimas, quam uti apud Lucam legitur $\tauῆς ζωῆς ταύτης$. Atque ita passim in versione Syriaca pro salute æterna ܕܝܝܬܐ vita legitur.—Keuchner.

¹ “Γερουσία (γερούσιος from γέρων), a council of elders, a senate, Paus. 3,

11. Xen. Mem. 4, 4, 6. So the eldership, i.e. collect. the elders among the Jews, either of the whole people, Sept. for זקנים , Ex. iii. 16, 18; Deut. xxvii. 1; or of particular cities, Deut. xix. 12; xxi. 2, sq. al.; and later the *Sanhedrim*, Judith iv. 8; xv. 8; 1 Macc. xii. 6, al.”—Robinson's Lexicon.

This is the only place in the New Testament where this word occurs.

² “Matutinum tempus valde aptum et proportionatum est ad Dei magnalia

Whether the *high priest* was aware of this deliverance of the Apostles until they had sent to the prison is not told us. Probably some rumours reached them which they sought to verify by sending formally to the prison. As the meeting-place of the Sanhedrim was in a chamber on the south side of the temple, they might not, without inquiry, have been aware of the presence of the Apostles within the sacred precincts, as these would most probably be teaching the people in Solomon's porch, which was at a distance from the session-chamber of the priests and council.

Alford.

(22) *But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, (23) Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.* (24) *Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.*¹

Luke xxii. 4.
Acts iv. 1.

The officers found the prison shut with *all safety*. If the doors had been opened by the Angel of the Lord they had again been closed after the Apostles had passed through. It is idle to inquire whether the Apostles had been delivered without the doors having been opened or not. The mode in which the miracle was wrought is not stated. We only know that when the officers reached the prison and examined it they found nothing removed, the doors shut as usual, all seemingly in order; the guard was on the watch, and no one could be accused of negligence. There is no pretext for saying now *the disciples came by night and stole the Apostles away while we slept*. The guards were *standing*, not lying nor sleeping, *without*, and they watched over the prison, believing that the Apostles were still within. No marvel that the high priest, when he *heard these things*, was perplexed, and *doubted* what the effect of this miracle

Matt. xxviii.
13.

Fromond.

percipienda: Moyses ait populo, Exod. xvi. 6, *Vespere scietis quod Dominus eduxerit vos de Ægypto, et mane videbitis gloriam Domini*. Cur non etiam vespere sed mane? Quia tunc anima purior et defecior est ad Dei dona accipienda et recognoscendam summam Dei largitatem et benignitatem."
—Sylveira.

¹ "Διηρόρουν περὶ αὐτῶν τί ἂν

γίνοιτο τοῦτο — Ambigebant de illis quidnam fieret."—*Vulgate*. "Obstupescabant super his et cogitabant quid hoc esset."—*Syrus*. "Hæsitabant de illis quid illud esset."—*Lucif*. "Les princes des Prestres ayant oui ces paroles, se trouverent en grande peine touchant ces hommes ne sçachant ce que devienroit cette affaire."—*Mons Version*.

would be upon the minds of the people, and what would be its consequence in increasing the numbers of the believers in Christ. As with the world, even so with the high priest now. They who harass and persecute the servants of Christ involve themselves in countless perplexities. Bengel.

(25) *Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.* (26) *Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence:*¹ *for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.* (27) *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,* Matt. xxi. 26.

In the time of trial the weakness of Peter was evidenced, first by his flying when his Lord was seized by those who accompanied Judas, and afterwards by his drawing his sword and smiting the high priest's servant, and then by denying Him; now, when he had been endued with real strength, and had received the special gift of the Holy Ghost, he submits to be brought before the high priest, though no power was exerted in conducting him. The Apostles in doing this showed their submission to authority which yet at that moment dared not make any show of its power. Lorinus.
Fromond. Fortitude is not evidenced by sudden acts of violence and of resolute deeds in the moment of peril, but by endurance.²

The high priest and the rulers dared not use *violence*, because the people, moved by the miracle of the Apostles' deliverance from prison, as well as touched and convinced by their teaching, favoured them, though the hearts of their rulers were hardened against them and the truths which they taught. These abstained, however, from showing their indignation out of fear of the people, though not from any worthier motive. As impious men, and unbelievers in general, dread chiefly material power and man's strength, so these rulers of the Jews feared the people, though they Ferus.

¹ "Adduxit illos sine vi — *Vulg.* Non violenter — *Arabicus.* Magnates se gerentes erga eos — *Ethiop.* Hoc est, leniter ac honorificentia eos duxit, ut fieri solet cum magnatibus et rationem subdit Textus: *Ne lapidarentur.*" — *Sylveira.*

² "Revocabat fortasse condiscipulis Petrus in memoriam se gladio cadentem aliquem ut Christum vindicaret, acriter

fuisse ab Ipso Christo coercitum. Jacobus quoque et Joannes reprehensionem magistri commemorarunt, negantis scire illos, *cujus Spiritus essent* [Luc ix. 52], quando in inhospitales Samaritanos ignem de celo devocare volebant. Hanc fortitudinem tantam postea tot vivi sancti sunt imitati, negantes armis repugnandum persecutoribus sed patientia." — *Lorinus.*

feared not God—feared the people, indeed, the more because they feared not God.

In the seizure of the Apostles was fulfilled the prediction of their Master—they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. Again, when we read the words of Peter before the council, we are reminded of the rest of Christ's promise and command—when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Matt. x. 17—
20.

Matt. xxiii.
35; xxvii.
25.
Acts ii. 23,
36; iii. 15;
iv. 18; vii.
52.

(28) *Saying, Did not we straitly command you¹ that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.*

Here it would seem that the Sanhedrim scrupulously avoided using the name of Christ; it is *this name* and *this man*. *Behold*; they speak as of an unwonted thing. *Behold*, so far from doing as we have commanded you to do, you have preached but the more, and have *filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*, and are inciting the people against us, *and intend to bring this man's blood upon us*; ² that is, either or both of these:—

Lorinus.
Alford.

(1) You wish to make us out to be guilty of *this man's blood*, by charging us with putting to death one who was innocent.

Augustine.

(2) You endeavour to hold us up to the vengeance of the people, and so to cause blood-shedding, because we have put to death *this man* whom ye say is risen again.

Dion. Carth.

The high priest and the rulers of the people had forgotten how lately they themselves had imprecated this curse upon their own heads, and on the heads of their children. *His blood be on us and on our children.*

Bede.
Matt. xxvii.
25.

Acts iv. 19.

(29) *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

¹ παραγγελία παρηγγελαμεν.—
“Præcipiendo præcepimus est Hebraismus: solebant enim Hebræi sic geminare verba ad majorem emphasim et energiam, id est, districtè et vehementissime præcepimus.”—Lienard.

² “Vultisne occasione hominis hujus

interemti turbas dare in populo, facere ut fiant hominum concursus et res vergat in rebellionem, adeoque nos exponere furori plebis? Metuebant igitur ne plebs concitata adversus eos rebellaret, tanquam auctores cædis in J. su perpetratæ.”—Rosenmüller.

From these words, *Peter and the other Apostles*, it would seem that it was not Peter and John only who had been cast into prison and delivered by the angel, unless, indeed, that when delivered Peter and John were joined by the other Apostles.

The decision and commands of the magistrates are to be obeyed in all just things, and also in all things which, without being just or unjust, are indifferent, and not opposed to the positive law of God.¹ We have an instance of this in the Apostles—at this time they came at the command of the high priest, though no compulsion was used, and showed their readiness to obey in all things, until there was a conflict between the subordinate laws of man and the higher law of God. Then they hesitated not. God had commanded them to teach the people, and they dared not disobey this command in submission to any mandate of man.

Hofmeister.

Ferus.

(30) *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.* (31) *Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

Matt. i. 21.
Luke xiv. 47.
Acts ii. 33,
36; iii. 13—
15, 26; x.
39; xiii. 29,
38; xxii. 14.
Gal. iii. 13.
Eph. i. 7.
Col. i. 14.
Phil. ii. 9.
Heb. ii. 10;
xii. 2.
1 Pet. ii. 24.

The God of our fathers, whom ye therefore, the children of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, are bound to obey, *raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree*; that is, *slew by hanging on a tree*. Throughout his speeches we are continually reminded of the Epistles of St. Peter, and here we recall the words, *who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.*²

Humphrey.

1 Pet. ii. 24.

Him hath God the Father exalted with His right hand, with His great power, *to be a Prince*, to whom we owe all allegiance; and not a Prince only, but also a *Saviour*, who can deliver those who are the captives of sin. If, indeed, He were not a Prince, He could not be a Saviour. The efficacy of His sacrifice for us depends upon His Divine dignity and nature; He was a Prince *to give repentance*, for this is as much a direct gift from God as that other gift which follows upon our repentance—the *forgiveness of sins*. When we repent it is because God has moved us so to do,

Alford,

Lange.

¹ "Antequam Petrus se excuset, hoc adjiciendum puto. Si per senatum aliquid decretum et mandato evulgatum fuerit quod justum ac bonum est, quod gloriæ Dei et charitati proximi non contrariatur, certè contemni à nemine debet, nec magistratus sinet à populo

illud impunè negligi."—Hofmeister.

See Hooker on the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Book I. c. 16.

² "ἐπὶ ξύλου, on a tree—In a tree—the tree of knowledge of good and evil—was the beginning of sin: in a tree was the atonement for it."—Bengel.

and when we have repented of our sin then does He forgive us.¹ Christ is a *Saviour* :—

Fromond.

(1) By His self-renunciation shown in stooping to the humiliation of our flesh.

(2) By His sacrifice of Himself in His death upon the cross for us.

Lange.

(3) By His exaltation to the throne of glory, there ever to mediate for us.

Let us note that whenever the Apostle denounces the sin of those who crucified the Prince of peace, the Saviour of the world, then, lest these men should think their sin too great for pardon, and should therefore despair of Christ's mercy, he adds this doctrine of *the forgiveness of sin*. In these words of St. Peter we are taught—

Chrysostom.

(1) That Christ who was crucified—*whom ye slew and hanged on a tree*—the Incarnate Saviour, is He from whom alone salvation comes. *There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*

Acts iv. 12.

(2) That repentance, even in its beginning, the very desire of returning to God, as well as the accomplishment of this desire in a perfected repentance, is a gift from God.

(3) That the forgiveness of sin follows after repentance, and is offered to all those who will repent, and only to them.

Hofmeister.

John xv. 26,
27.
Acts ii. 4; x.
44.

(32) *And we are His witnesses of these things ;² and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.*

We are *His witnesses*, not only of the deeds of Christ's incarnate life, His sufferings and resurrection and ascension, for of *these things* all were witnesses, but the Apostles bore witness with the Holy Ghost that He does give repentance, and has promised *the forgiveness of sin* to those who truly repent. The witness is a joint witness, that of the Apostles and *also the Holy Ghost*. They witnessing by their preaching and lives, He witnessing in them by the Pentecostal gifts given to them, and by the miracles of healing which He wrought through their instrumentality, and at their prayer.³

Chrysostom.

Sylveira.

¹ "*Ad dandam pœnitentiam Israeli*—Nisi enim Christus spiritum pœnitentiæ et contritionis per gratiam suam inspiret, peccator salubriter pœnitere non potest."—*Fromond*.

² "Literally *words*. Histories expressed in words." *Alford*. "*τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα*, refer ad res illas in facto

positas, quarum testes erant, veluti Jesus resurrexisse ex mortuis, et ad doctrinas quas proponebant, v. 31. Nam *ῥήματα* = *דברים*, sunt res gestæ et doctrinæ."—*Rosenmüller*.

³ "*Et nos sumus testes horum verborum* : non sic accipiendum est, quasi aut Apostoli sine Spiritu Sancto aut

Whom God hath given—not only by pouring into their hearts His gifts of sanctification and of boldness for the work of their ministry, but also by those outward signs which ought to have convinced all; and these gifts were *given to them that obey Him*. They only receive the Holy Spirit as their Guide and Instructor who *obey* God, and own Christ to be indeed their Prince and their Saviour.

Fromond.

Hofmeister.

(33) *When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.*

Acts ii. 37;
vii. 54.

Their hearts were not broken by the sense of their sin, there was no wish on their part to repent and to know the after-gift of the remission of their sins. They were but the more hardened when their sin was shown to them. Anger had blinded the eyes of their mind. Their heart was indeed pierced and torn, but it was with the conflict of rage and indignation against the Apostles, and of fear because of the people; they were not, however, moved to seek that forgiveness which was here proclaimed, either by the miracle of the deliverance of the Apostles from prison, or by their burning words.

Fromond.

Hofmeister.

(34) *Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;*

Acts xxii. 3.

There are three persons of the name of Gamaliel mentioned by Jewish writers. The first, Rabban Gamaliel ben Hillel, called the old; the second, a grandson of Gamaliel the old, called Rabban Gamaliel the second, or Gamaliel of Jabne; the third Gamaliel ben Jehuda, surnamed Battrah, the last, a great-grandson of Gamaliel the second. Rabban Gamaliel the second and Rabban Gamaliel the third lived beyond the period of sacred history, and with the latter expired the glory of the school of Hillel. Rabban Gamaliel the old is said to have been the son of Simeon the Pharisee,¹ and grandson of the famous Hillel. He was among the most celebrated expounders of the law, and a receiver of the

Lange.

Spiritus Sanctus sine Apostolis testificetur; sed quod Spiritus Sanctus testatus sit per eos et ipsi per Spiritum Sanctum."—*Salmeron*.

¹ By some this Simeon, surnamed by the Jews, *the Just*, is supposed to be

the same as he who in the temple took the infant Saviour into his arms and prophesied of His office. [Luke ii. 25—35.] This, however, is but supposition. On the three Gamaliels, see *Etheridge's Jerusalem and Tiberias*.

Lightfoot.

traditions of the Cabbala said to have been given on Mount Sinai. Under him St. Paul was reared, and it is said with some probability that Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, was his fellow-disciple in the school of Gamaliel.¹ His advice to let the Apostles alone, given as it was at a critical moment, has led to the supposition that he was secretly a favourer of Christianity, but there are no grounds in his speech for this conjecture. His counsel might have been dictated either by the natural opposition which existed between the Pharisees, to which party he belonged, and the Sadducees, who composed a large part of the Sanhedrim, or from admiration of the bearing of the Apostles, and of the truths which they proclaimed. Rabban Gamaliel the old died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem; that is, in the year of our Lord 52, and was succeeded by his son Simon.

Biscoe.

In various ways does God show His care over the Apostles and the infant Church. He called the Apostles at this time to be witnesses of the facts in the incarnate life of the Saviour, and of the doctrines which He revealed to them; and to preserve their lives He raises up out of the midst of their enemies one who was able by his words to turn aside the rage of the Sadducees, and be the means of preserving the lives of the Apostles.

Hofmeister.

(35) *And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.* (36) *For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.*

The only Theudas mentioned by Josephus as a disturber of the public peace lived after the days of Judas, and not before, as the one here mentioned by St. Luke did. Several explanations have been offered to account for this apparent discrepancy between the Jewish historian and the Evan-

¹ Some have supposed that Stephen was also reared in the same school, and that he was a fellow-student with Saul and with Barnabas. Onkelos, the author or editor of the Targum on the Pentateuch, was, according to the Babylonian Talmud and other ancient Jewish authorities, brought up in this same

school, and at the death of his friend and master Gamaliel ben Hillel, he is said to have burnt more than seventy minæ worth of spices in his honour (*Tosiftah Shabb. 8*). See Leusden in *Phil. Heb. Mixtus* de Targumim, p. 43. Etheridge's *Jerusalem and Tiberias*, p. 191; and Deutch's *Literary Remains*, p. 334.

gelist. Some have supposed that St. Luke might have made a mistake, others think it an instance of the inaccuracy of Josephus. There is no occasion for either supposition. The more usual explanation is, that there were two of the name, and that Josephus mentions the last, and St. Luke the first. The name Theudas is a common one. We have just seen that three Gamaliels are mentioned in later Jewish history, and the apostolic company included two named Judas, two bearing the name of John, and at the same time there were two named James, one of whom has often been confounded with the other. It is hardly, indeed, likely that the Theudas spoken of by Josephus is the same as the one mentioned by St. Luke, as the inconsiderable number of his adherents hardly agrees with the account given by Jewish historians of the insurrection which he headed. Wieseler thinks that the Theudas of St. Luke is the same as Matthias, who rose in rebellion on account of the census, and that Theudas is only the Greek translation of the Hebrew Matthias. Either of these suppositions may be the correct one, and the difficulty is not one which in any way affects the accuracy of St. Luke, but has its origin in our inacquaintance with the history of this period.¹

Lightfoot.

Origen cont.
Celsum.
Whitby.

Wordsworth.

Jewish
Antiq. xx.
5, § 1.Jewish Ant.
xvii. 6, § 4.
Wieseler's
Chron.
Synopsis.

(37) *After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.*

The origin of the insurrection under Judas of Galilee² was the imposition of a tribute by the Romans, which the Zealots among the Jews refused to pay as a dishonour to God.³ It was with reference to this opinion that the question was asked of St. Peter, *Doth not your Master pay tribute?* and later in our Lord's ministry the scribes sought to entangle Him by asking, *Is it lawful to give tribute unto*

Matt. xvii. 24.

¹ On Theudas, see note B at the end of this chapter.

² "Josephus (Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 1, § 1) says that he was a native of Gamala in lower Gaulonitis. In two other passages (Ant. lib. xviii. cap. 1, § 6; and Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 8, § 1) he calls him a Galilaean."—Cook.

³ "St. Luke's words in the days of the taxing are explained by the fact recorded by the Jewish historian, that in the Presidency of Quirinus, A.D. 6, when the taxing, which had been

only an ἀπογραφὴ, or enrolment of names, or census, at the time of the Nativity, was followed up by an ἀπορίμνησις, or levying of imposts and rates in money on the persons and property registered; Judas of Galilee, or Gaulonitis, arose in revolt."—Wordsworth.

"Judas hic fuit auctor sectæ Galilæorum, qui pro libertate sua tuenda omne vectigal et dominium Cæsaris, etiam morte propositâ abnuebant. Vide Josephum, lib. xviii. Antiq. c. 1."—Corn. à Lapiide.

Matt. xxii. 17,
Luke xxiii. 2,
6.
Acts ii. 7.
Fromond.

Cæsar, or not? Hence the accusation against Him and His disciples that they were Galileans, and the attempt to fasten upon Him the charge of sedition against Cæsar.

It was the followers of this Judas, *whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices* when he attempted to suppress their rebellion.¹ In this, however, he was only partially successful. Thus St. Luke does not say that the *much* people whom he *drew away after him* perished, but that they were *dispersed*. Forty years after his death his two sons, James and Simon, were crucified by Tiberius Alexander, and many years after their execution Eleazar maintained the opinions of Judas; so true is it that his followers were not destroyed, but only *dispersed*. They seem to have maintained their position until the destruction of the temple under Titus, and the same spirit and opinions which inflamed Judas caused subsequent insurrections of the Jews down to their final dispersion.

They *were scattered abroad*, dispersed, and finally perished, for their doctrine was human. The Apostles and disciples of Christ were also *scattered abroad*, but only that they might scatter in all lands the seed of Divine truth, and build up an imperishable Church. What they taught was not of men, and it came not to nought.

Prov. xxi. 30.
Is. viii. 10.
Matt. xv. 13.
Luke xxi. 15.
Acts vii. 51;
ix. 5; xxiii.
9.
1 Cor. i. 25.

(38) *And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: (39) But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

The language of Gamaliel would not indicate that he was convinced of the Divine origin of *this counsel or this work*. He does not acknowledge that the mission of the Apostles was from God, notwithstanding the miracle of their deliverance from prison, by which God had attested it. It may, indeed, be that he, in common with so many of the Jewish people, was unmoved by this and other miracles, because they were so often attributed to the power of demons.²

Baumgarten.

¹ "Ex hac secta, non ex provincia Galilææ, erant Galilæi illi, quorum sanguinem miscuisse cum sacrificiis dicitur Pilatus, Luc. xiii. 1. Neque enim Pilatus jus habuit in Galilæos. Quia ergo Christus et Discipuli Galilæi erant, in ejus sectæ suspicionem venerunt apud Pharisæos; et ideò ab illo rogant, utrum liceat censum dare

Cæsari."—Sanchez.

² "Si est ex hominibus, ex hominum auctoritate aut incepto aut proposito, non poterit durare. Mortalia enim sunt quæ à mortalibus instituuntur, et caduca ac vana, quæ Deus non decernit, fovet et promoyet, etiam si videantur magnis incæptis exoriri et crescere."—Arias Montanus.

(40) *And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.* (41) *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

Matt. v. 12;
x. 17; xxiii.
34.
Mark xiii. 9.
Acts iv. 18.
Rom. v. 3.
2 Cor. xii. 10.
Phil. i. 29.
Heb. x. 34.
James i. 3.
1 Pet. iv. 13,
16.

They agreed to what was a compromise of the matter, and in which justice was little regarded, from fear of the people. They acquiesced with Gamaliel in the policy of letting the Apostles depart, though they were unwilling to yield to his counsel and to *let them alone*. They beat them as though guilty, they sent them away as though innocent, for the punishment for propagating a new doctrine opposed to the religion of the temple was death, and not beating. Thus openly did the Sanhedrim proclaim its injustice.

Alford.

The Apostles *departed . . . rejoicing*, though they had been treated with the indignity of being scourged, which was a shameful and servile punishment among the Jews. Thus early were they taught to *suffer shame for His name*,¹ and to prove the truth of their Lord's words, *Beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues*. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, knowing that the shame or contumely to which they were subjected by men was but dignity in the sight of God.

Tirinus.

Hammond.

Hardouin.

Matt. x. 17.

Bengel.

It is the height of Christian virtue not only patiently, nor even merely willing, to suffer for the sake of Christ, but ever joyfully to do so. The same Apostle who was among those who so rejoiced at this time seems to refer in one of his Epistles to this same grace—*If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf*.²

Novarinus.

1 Pet. iv. 16.

(42) *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

Acts ii. 46;
iv. 20, 29.

God withdraws oftentimes from His servants His protecting arm, and gives to them His sustaining Spirit instead,

¹ "Ubi quis se cogitat ad Deum ire, coram Deo ambulare, facillè adversa omnia tolerat; et nuda hæc cogitatio vires, ferendis contumeliis, addit."—Novarinus.

² "Et illi quidam ibant gaudentes. Non dicit quod non dolebant, sed

quod dolentes gaudebant, ait Chrys. Dolor enim erat in corpore, gaudium in Spiritu: *Omne gaudium existimate, fratres, cum intentiones varias incideritis: scientes quod probatio fidei vestræ patientiam operatur*" [Jac. i. 2, 3].—Fromond.

in order that the powers of the world might first be inwardly overcome before they are annihilated for ever.

Baumgarten.

Persecution which daunts the weak, and only the weak, does but confirm the strong, and makes them more resolutely to endure.¹ This was evidenced in the conduct of the Apostles

Queuel.

of Christ,—they were beaten and threatened, and going from the presence of the council in its anger, went forth, not suffering a day to pass in which they did not preach the doctrine of Christ, both publicly in the temple, and privately

Rosenmüller.

in every house which they entered; and the truth they preached was this, that He who was crucified had risen again a Prince and a Saviour, and that *Jesus* is the *Christ* (*Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν*).²

Heinrich.
Alford.

¹ "Les persecutions affoiblissent les foibles et fortifient les forts; découragent les ames communes et inspirent une nouvelle ardeur pour la verité à ceux qui sont profondément enracinez dans la charité."—*Queuel*.

² τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν is the reading adopted by Alford instead of Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν—*Evangelizantes Christum Jesum.*—*Vulg.* Non cessabant docere et evangelium predicare de Jesu qui est Christus.—*Eras. Schmidt*.

Note A.—Many commentators consider that the young men who came in, and prepared and bore forth the bodies of Ananias and Sapphira for burial, were church officers, whose duty it was to perform these offices. Thus *Mosheim* (*De rebus Christ. ante Constant. Sæc. prim. cap. xxxvii.*) says, "Hos ego non juvenes tantum, sed Apostolorum et ecclesiæ ministros esse arbitror, qui et Apostolorum mandata circumferebant et varia numera, quum conventus suos celebrarent Christiani in illis obibant." *Olshausen* says, "These νεώτεροι are best conceived as occupying a position similar to that of the acoluthi or acolytes at a later period;" and combating the opinion of *Neander* (*History of the Planting of Christianity, Book i. chap. 2.*) that they were only noted as young men, because such a labour was most fitting for the young, he remarks that the pronoun οἱ νεώτεροι, the young men, favours the belief that they were men devoted to, or set aside for, that office, and that otherwise the text would have read τινες νεώτεροι. *Heinrich* says "Νεώτεροι juniores qui e cætu Christianorum tunc temporis aderant, omnino vel servi, apparatores, qui יְדָיִים pueri, audire solent." *Kuinoel's* words

are, "Vocabulo νεώτερος Alexandrini Judæi explicuerunt Heb. יָדָיִים quo etiam minister significatur, et יָדָיִים quo non tantum puer, juvenis sed etiam servus, minister indicatur. Et servi Abrahami armati dicuntur νεανίσκοι, Gen. xiv. 24. Milites Jes. xiii. 18, ubi in testu Hebraico extat voc. יָדָיִים." *Beelen* remarks "οἱ νεώτεροι. Quicum, nemine monente, e loco suo surrexerint et tanquam certæ quædam personæ (οἱ νεώτεροι cum articulo) designentur, verisimile est eos fuisse tales, quibus in publicis Ecclesiæ conventibus definitum aliquod officium incumberet." *Tillemont*, however (*Mem. pour servir Hist. Ecclesiastique, tom. 1. Saint Pierre, Art. xiv.*), without expressing any opinion, says merely that "Quelques jeunes gens qui étaient là l'enlevèrent et l'emportèrent pour l'enterer." *Humphrey* remarks "that the name is the correlative of πρεσβύτεροι, and that there seems no strong argument for or against the conjecture" that they were ministers of the Church.

Though contact with a dead body rendered a man unclean, and special directions were given for his purification (*Num. xix. 11—22*), yet the burial of the dead was regarded as a work of

mercy commendable by man and acceptable to God: hence the blessing pronounced by David on the men of Jabesh Gilead for their reverent burial of the bones of Saul and his three sons (2 Sam. ii. 5), and the care shown in later times by Tobit, in the burial of the Jew strangled and cast out in the market-place (Tobit ii. 3—5). When, then, with the doctrine of our incorporation with Christ, and of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the bodies of the believers, and of the sanctity of the human body by the Incarnation of Christ, "the feeling of disgust and dislike towards dead bodies gave place to a feeling of reverence," and men "were drawn towards the places where the earthly remains of the departed brethren lay, as to fields sown with the seeds of a glorious harvest" (*Döllinger's First Age of the Church*, Book iii. chap. v.), it were likely under the combined influence of Jewish belief and of Christian reverence for the dead, that persons would from the first days of the Church be appointed, or would devote themselves to this work of mercy. The order of *Copiatæ* or *Fossarii* was indeed much later, and is said to have been first instituted in the days of Constantine, but this fact as to the formal appointment of these ministers is no proof that such office were not performed by men set aside for this purpose from the earliest ages. In the spurious epistle of *St. Ignatius* to the people of Antioch—the date of which is very early—we read, "I salute the sub-deacons, the readers, the singers, the door-keepers, the labourers, the exorcists, the confessors," and we learn from *Epiphanius* that the labourers were those who had the care of the burial of the faithful. "Laborantes sunt, qui corpora eorum, qui dormierunt obvolvunt et cooperiunt." And *Sanchez*, who quotes the words, says, "In ecclesia inter varios ordines qui diversa munera primis illis temporibus obibant fuit etiam eorum qui fidelium corpora curabant aptabantque sepulturæ; hi verò dicebantur *laborantis*." . . . The probability therefore is that these "young men" who

buried Ananias and Sapphira were persons to whom were assigned the duty of superintending the burials of their fellow-Christians.

Professor Blunt says "the Apostles had attendants to assist them in the lower and more mechanical parts of their duties; for such appear to have been the young men who carried out the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira; probably answering to the minister who is described as waiting on Barnabas and Saul—they had John to their minister, Acts xiii. 5."—(*History of the Christian Church during the first three Centuries*, chap. iii.) In the days of the Apostles, indeed, it is likely that this office of charity would be performed by enthusiastic volunteers, whilst in the days of Constantine it might be necessary to appoint some persons formally to the same ministry (see *Bingham on the Antiquity of the Christ. Church*, Book III. chap. 8, § 1).

Note B. — "Θεὺδᾶς. Josephus mentions an insurrectionist, named *Theudas*, who appeared in the reign of Claudius, some ten years after the delivery of this speech (*Antiq. lib. xx. c. 5*). Gamaliel, therefore, must refer here to another man of this name; and this man, since he preceded Judas the Galilean (v. 37), could not have lived much later than the reign of Herod the Great. The year of that monarch's death, as Josephus states, was remarkably turbulent; the land was overrun with belligerent parties, under the direction of insurrectionary chiefs, or fanatics. Josephus mentions but three of these disturbers by name; he passes over the others with a general allusion. Among those whom the Jewish historian has omitted to name, may have been the *Theudas* whom Gamaliel has here in view. The name was not an uncommon one (*Win. Realw*, vol. ii. p. 609); and it can excite no surprise that one *Theudas*, who was an insurgent, should have appeared in the time of Augustus, and another fifty years later, in the time of Claudius. Josephus gives an account of four men named Simon, who followed

each other within forty years, and of three named Judas, within ten years, who were all instigators of rebellion. This mode of reconciling Luke with Josephus is approved by Lardner, Bengel, Kuinoel, Olshausen, Anger, Winer, and others. Jost, the Jewish historian (*Geschichte der Israeliten*, Band ii. Anh. p. 76), assents to this explanation, and admits the credibility of Luke as well as of Josephus. [This is approved by Origen in lib. i. contra Celsus.] Another very plausible supposition is that Luke's Theudas may have been identical with one of the three insurgents whom Josephus designates by name. Sonntag, who agrees with those who adopt this view, has supported it with much learning and ability. He maintains that the Theudas mentioned by Gamaliel is the individual who occurs in Josephus under the name of Simon, a slave of Herod, who attempted to make himself king, in the year of that monarch's death. He urges the following reasons for that opinion: first, that Simon, as he was the most noted among those who disturbed the public peace at that time, would be apt to occur to Gamaliel as an illustration of his point; secondly, he is described as a man of the same lofty pretensions (*εἶναι ἄξιος ἐλπίσας παρ' ὀντινοῦν* = *λέγων εἶναι τινα ἑαυτόν*); thirdly, he died a violent death, which Josephus does not mention as true of the other insurgents; fourthly, he appears to have had comparatively few adherents, in conformity with Luke's *ὥσεί τετρακοσίων*; and lastly, his having been originally a slave accounts for the twofold appellation, since it was very common among the Jews to assume a different name

on changing their occupation or mode of life. It is very possible, therefore, that Gamaliel speaks of him as Theudas, because having borne that name so long at Jerusalem, he was best known by it to the members of the Sanhedrim; and Josephus, on the contrary, who wrote for Romans and Greeks, speaks of him as Simon, because it was under that name that he set himself up as king, and in that way acquired his foreign notoriety (*Tacit. Hist. v. 9*). There can be no valid objection to either of the foregoing suppositions; both are reasonable, and both must be disproved before Luke can be justly charged with having committed an anachronism in this passage."—*Hackett*.

The name Simon might be chosen by a pretender to royalty, in order to recall the glories of the Maccabæan family, and of Simon the High Priest, "the Benefactor and Ethnarch of the Jews" (*Joseph. Antiq. xiii. 12, § 6*). So great a favourite was this "Prince of the sons of God" with the Jewish nation, that, as a proof of their affection, they were accustomed to date their contracts from the year of his accession to the high priesthood (*Ewald's History of Israel*, vol. v. p. 463).

In comparing a statement in Josephus with another in the *Gospels* or *Acts*, it will be well to remember that the Jewish historian is accused of not unfrequently departing from "the exact order" of time both with reference to his dates and the documents which he cites (*Ewald*, vol. v. p. 406); that "as far as numbers go he is very inaccurate in the latter part of his work" (*ib.*); and that "the chronology of Josephus is frequently inaccurate" (*ib.* p. 496).

CHAPTER VI.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

TIBERIUS.
PONTIUS PILATE.
CAIAPHAS.

(1) *And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.*

Acts ii. 41;
iv. 4, 35;
v. 14; ix.
29; xi. 20.

ALTHOUGH some writers suppose that the narrative contained in this chapter took place after an interval of two or three years had elapsed from the time referred to in the concluding verses of the previous chapter, the other, and as it seems to me the sounder view, and that most accordant with the tenor of this history, is, that there was only a very short interval between the imprisonment and release of the Apostles and the appointment of the seven deacons. Even Alford, who assumes the correctness of the theory, that a considerable period had elapsed after the release of the Apostles and the election, ordination, and death of Stephen, yet connects the *and* (ὁὲ) of this chapter with what had immediately gone before.¹

In those days (ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις), soon after, that is, the beating of the Apostles, and the command not to teach any more in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, when threats had been uttered, and persecution and scourging awaited the new converts, the number of the disciples was multiplied.² Then, however—as though in illustration of the prophet's words, *Thou hast multiplied this nation, and not increased the joy*—there broke out the first internal trouble to the Church, a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews. In this we may see an evidence of the readiness

Fromond.

Ferus.

Isaiah ix. 3.

¹ “ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις—δὲ, in contrast to the former entire unity of the Church: introducing that great and important chapter in her history of

Judaizing divisions, which from this time onward disquieted her.”—Alford.

² “Ecclesiæ proprium est, ut vineat, cum læditur.”—Hilary de Trinitate.

of man to fall away from grace, which remains even in the regenerate soul; a proof that however winnowed in this life, somewhat of the chaff still clings to the wheat.¹

Fromond.

It is the property of the Church to thrive and increase in the midst of sufferings, when those sufferings are for Christ's sake; to grow when most trampled upon; and

Novarinus.

to spread and extend itself when men most oppose the truth.

This, however, is not always, nor even generally, the case in

times of apparent prosperity; and so in *those days*, when

the Apostles were without ceasing preaching Jesus, and

when in consequence *the numbers of the disciples were*

multiplied, then there *arose a murmuring* and division

Stier.

among the members of the Church. It was as in that

miracle which foreshadowed the progress of the Church

when the net of Peter and his companions *enclosed a great*

Luke vi. 6.

multitude of fishes so that *their net brake*. Thus at this time

schism and separation in heart and affections threatened the

Lorinus.

Church of Christ, and significantly we are told that it

arose out of the distribution of the alms of the disciples.

In this way did Satan find means at the first to do what he

still does, make a division among Christians even by means

Queasel.

of works of charity and mercy. Such need have we to

watch over our best works, lest they become snares to our

selves and an offence to others.

The *murmuring* was caused—

(1) By the increase of the numbers of the disciples, with which a diversity of interests was introduced into the Church, and a greater temptation to give way to partiality.

(2) By a diversity of national feeling and action between

Corn. & Lap.

the Grecian converts and the Hebrews. This temper St. Paul

rebukes when he reminds the divided Church of Galatia that

there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there

Gal. iii. 28.

is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

By *the Grecians* is meant those Jews who were born outside

the land of Canaan, who used the Greek language in their

synagogues, and had in many particulars adopted the Greek

Fromond.
Menochius.
Bengel.

customs. It was not merely that they used Greek in their in-

tercourse one with another, this, except in the case of extreme

zealots, seems to have been the custom even in Palestine.

¹ "In this partiality of the Hebrews and murmuring of the Hellenists were the seeds of a general persecution sown. Did God ever in any age or country withdraw His restraining Providence, and let loose the world upon the Christians, till there was a cause among themselves? Is not an open, general perse-

cution always both penal and medicinal? A punishment of those that will not accept of milder reproofs as well as a medicine to heal their sickness, and at the same time a means both of purifying and strengthening those whose heart is still right with God."—*Wesley*.

itself.¹ The distinguishing mark between these two classes was probably the use of Hebrew or of Greek in the synagogues. But though the distinction may have been one of language and manners, not of race, Greek proselytes would no doubt be ranked amongst the Greek or Hellenistic Jews, and hence among the seven deacons chosen because of this *murmuring*, one we are expressly told was a *proselyte of Antioch*, one, who having been born a Pagan, had been converted to Judaism, and was now numbered among the fol-
Whitby.
Olshausen.

lowers of Christ. They murmured *because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration*. Three interpretations have been affixed to these words. It has been supposed that they mean—

(1) That there was then a body of deaconesses whose duty it was to minister to the poor of their own sex, and that the Greek or Hellenistic Jews were practically repelled from this ministering, or at least were not allowed to do as much as the Hebrew deaconesses; or—
Chrysostom.
Bede.
Arias Mont.

(2) That though permitted to exercise their office, yet the Grecian women were deputed to lower and harder offices of mercy;² or—
Rabanus.
Cajetan.

(3) That by *daily ministrations* is meant the daily distribution of alms, of which the Hebrew widows and poor received a larger share than the Grecian widows and poor who were strangers at Jerusalem.
Æumenius.
Gangæus.
Mariana.

The latter interpretation is that which is now generally acquiesced in, and is most in accord with the history of the Church in those early days.³

Some commentators have combined these views, which are not necessarily opposed one to the other, and have thought that the Grecian widows were not employed equally with the Hebrews, and that the Grecian poor were neglected by the Hebrew almoners. One, indeed, would follow from the other without any intentional or even conscious partiality on the part of the administration of the alms of the Church.⁴
Ferus.
Amielote.

¹ See discussions on the Gospels by Dr. Alexander Roberts, Part I.

² “ὅτι παρεθεωροῦντο ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ αἱ χῆραι αὐτῶν—Ethiopicus transtulit, *quod viderent viduas suas ministrare quotidie*. Videtur contentum viduarum Græcarum in eo constituisse, quod quotidianus administrandorum pauperum labor ipsis imponeretur.”—*De Dieu*.

³ “Alii exponunt, viduas Græcorum ad vilia ministeria obeunda præ cæteris viduis Hebræorum gravari solitas. Sed
 ACTS. VOL. I.

hic sensus ut parum illustris à quibusdam rejicitur. Quare verisimilius videtur, ut per ministerium quotidianum intelligamus, id quod in singulos dies cuique ad victum dabatur: qua in re cum pinguius et opulentiùs tractarentur viduæ Hebræorum quàm Græcorum, mirum non est si illæ se despectas arbitantes murmurarent.”—*Salmeron*.

⁴ “In viduarum locum ad hoc ministerium ordinati sunt Diaconi. Apostoli enim murmuri occursuri, activè

It must be borne in mind that the widows and orphans of these first members of the Church would have a powerful claim upon the disciples. Before their conversion they had a claim upon the Corban or Treasury of the Temple, which would hardly be acknowledged by the Temple authorities now they had become followers of Christ, and would be looked upon by many as apostates from Judaism.

How far this history is to be regarded as an account of the origin of the diaconate has been doubted. Ministers in an inferior grade to the Apostles there must have been before, who at least under the eye of the Apostles regulated the daily ministrations of alms to the poor. Indeed, the young men who undertook the burial of Ananias and Sapphira were, by so doing, officiating in the Church. Nor does it seem likely, if this were a new office, that the deacons would have been taken exclusively from the *Grecians*, as in that case the *Hebrews* would have had cause of *murmuring*. The account appears to be an introduction to the history of St. Stephen, and perhaps it is given by St. Luke only with reference to what follows.

(2) *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*

Up to this time the Apostles seem to have performed the two duties of imparting spiritual instruction and of ministering to the temporal necessities of the poorer members of the Church, or at least of personally superintending those who performed this latter duty. The increase, however, of those who required temporal help at this time threatened to interfere with the due performance of the higher duty which belonged to the apostolic office. So that when a *murmuring* arose at the real or supposed neglect of the widows of the Greek-speaking part of the infant Church, it was determined to appoint assistants specially to prevent this neglect for the future.¹ The appointment of the seven

dicunt: *Non est æquum nos ministrare mensis, ideoque creant Diaconos, qui loco viduarum iis ministrant. A viduis ergo totum murmur proserpsit ad viros: faminæ enim, uti minus habent iudicii quàm viri, ita magis privatis ducuntur affectibus.*—*Corn. à Lapide.*

1 “Passa est primum Ecclesia persecutiones, deinde hæreses et schismata, ut Bernardus scribit [vid. Serm. vi. in

Ps. xci. et xxxiii. in Cant]. Alia et alia Ecclesiam vexat tentatio: victo quasi illo externo adversariorum bello intestinum suscitatur Diabolus, ac domesticum, et proinde tanto magis periculosum. Quos minæ flagellæque robustiores, et charitate inter se conjunctiones reddiderant, eorum tantam illam concordiam terribilem, ut castrorum aciem ordinatam [Cant. vi. 3, 9],

2 Maccab. iii. 10.

Lewin in Fasti Sacri, p. 245.

Humphrey.

Olshausen.

Exod. xvii. 18.

[Epistle in office for making of deacons, 2—7.]

Ecumenius.

Cook.

appears to be an admission that there was some ground for this murmuring of the Hellenistic Jews. This office of assistant ministers, which was created because of a momentary difficulty, was soon adopted as an integral part of Church order, and soon after we read both of priests and of deacons. It is noteworthy that the most beneficial institutions have oftentimes had their origin from some disorder or imperfection in the social economy.¹

Two things are here to be noted :—

(1) The increase in the number of the disciples which took place *in those days*, at the moment when the Apostles were suffering persecutions, when they were imprisoned and beaten, and exposed to severe punishments.

(2) The rising up of envy and discontent with the increase of the number of the disciples. When the Church is growing outwardly, oftentimes faith is far from being strengthened within the body.

In order to appease this *murmuring*, the *twelve* Apostles called together the whole *multitude of the disciples*, not yet known by the distinctive name of Christians, but by that of brethren, and said, *It is not reason* (οὐκ ἀρεστὸν ἔστιν), it is not our desire or wish, *to leave the word of God*,² our proper and peculiar or higher office, and *serve tables*, to dispense temporal things, or be occupied in administering to the relief of the body. Whether this means the distribution of money, or of food to satisfy the *daily* wants of these *widows*, is uncertain, but most probably it means the latter.

Commentators have differed in opinion as to the office of the seven who were ordained by the Apostles after their election by the *multitude* of the disciples. Some suppose that they were appointed only to assist in the distribution of the alms of the faithful. Most commentators, however, understand by these words, *to serve tables*, that the seven were chosen to assist the Apostles in sacred as well as in temporal things, that they were assistants to the Apostles.³

urbare atque schismate disceindere
tizianorum ille superseminator [Matt.
xiii. 5], capitatis inimicus Ecclesiæ
conatus est."—Lorinus.

¹ "Hic refert Lucas qua primum
occasione, et quo consilio, deinde quo
ritu creati fuerint Diaconi. Dicit autem
quum exortum esset murmur inter disci-
pulos, hoc remedio sedatum esse,
quemadmodum vulgari proverbio di-
citur, 'Ex malis moribus ortas esse
bonas leges.'"—Calvin.

² "οὐκ ἀρεστὸν ἔστιν—Non placet,

non est probandum. Minus curantes,
quam fieret, si eo onere levaremur."
Rosenmüller. "Tigurina, non est com-
mendabile; Pagnin. non est placitum
Deo et hominibus; Syrus, non est res
pulchra; alii, non est conveniens: omnia
hæc significat ἀρεστόν."—Corn. à Lap.

³ "Τράπεζα hoc loco κατ' ἐξοχὴν
est mensa pecuniaria. Servire mensa
est impendere curam rei pecuniariæ et
hoc loco, nominatim operam dare fisco
et distribuendis pecuniis. Hoc sensu
hæc vox occurrit apud Josephum, in

Gloag.

Quesnel.

Fromond.

Lange.

Corn. à Lap.
Alford.

Chrysostom.

Sanchez.

In other passages of the New Testament we are taught the same lesson which these words give us,—that bishops, priests, and deacons are to remember that they are not to entangle themselves in the performance of temporal benefits to the flock committed to their charge, if these hinder them in the fulfilment of the spiritual, and therefore higher, duties of their office. Nay, even spiritual works, if not the proper duty of the minister, are to be postponed for that work to which the minister of God has been ordained and specially called; thus St. Paul, who was sent forth to preach the gospel, deemed the work of baptizing the converts the proper duty of others, not his own, for he says, *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*¹

Fromond.

Lorinus.

1 Cor. i. 17.

Dent. i. 13.
Acts i. 21;
xvi. 2.
1 Tim. iii. 7.

(3) *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

Gloag.

Olshausen.

Stier.

Ferus.

Hammond.

As the murmuring had arisen because of neglect in the distribution of the alms of the faithful, the deacons or ministers appointed to dispense the charity of the Church were not appointed by the Apostles, as in the case of Saul and Barnabas, nor chosen by the lot of the twelve, but by the multitude, the whole body of those who contributed of their substance for the relief of the necessitous. This mode of selection seems not to have been resorted to afterwards, and in the Pastoral Epistles we have no trace of any ministers chosen by the disciples, but all were appointed by the apostles or by bishops appointed by them. Only in the moment of the first fervour of conversion to the faith could this office be safely left to the whole body of the disciples.

*Look ye out, choose with a single eye to the fitness of those selected, from among you, those who have lived amongst you, and are known to you, seven men, persons of adult age, neither women nor youths,*² *of honest report amongst the whole body of the faithful, full of the Holy Ghost.* The newly-appointed were to be known for their sanctity of life and marked out as fit for this office by the possession of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit poured out

Edicto Ptolemæi de Judæis manumittendis, Ant. xii. 2, 3. Ubi ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλικῆς τραπέζης κομιζόμενοι τὰ λύτρα, sunt de pecunia regia pretium redemptionis accipientes."—Rosenmüller.

¹ "Exigit officium prædicationis hominem vacuum externis, quamvis

spiritualibus curis; ita ut Paulus ne baptizare quidem vellet, quo magis sedulo evangelizaret, ad hoc se missum scribens, non ad illud [1 Cor. i. 17]."—Lorinus.

² "Jubent eligi viros, non pueros, non insipientes."—Ferus.

upon those who truly believed and manifested by their power of speaking with tongues and by prophesying. Acts x. 45, 46.
Acts xix. 6.

The qualifications, then, demanded of those who were selected by the disciples were—

(1) That they should be men of good or *honest report*, of unimpeachable honesty and well-attested purity of living.

(2) That they should *be full of the Holy Ghost*, inspired by the Holy Spirit, devout and thoroughly religious men.¹

(3) That they should be full of wisdom or prudence, and apt in the administration of the trust confided to them. Salmeron.

Though the need of providing for the proper distribution of the alms of the people was the occasion for the appointment of these deacons or ministers, it was not the sole, hardly even the principal, object of their appointment. The Spirit which willed that they should be called to the ministry of the Church and of the altar, willed also that they should be selected on the occasion of this *murmuring* on account of the neglect of the widows in the daily ministrations. The office, however, was not limited to this duty, nor did it cease with the ceasing of the immediate need. As the Levites, who avenged the outraged majesty of God upon the idolaters who had made and worshipped the golden calf, were called by their zeal to the office of the priesthood; as the murmuring of the people against Moses led to the appointment of the seventy elders to assist Moses, and to be the standing council of the whole nation; and as the wish to inform Theophilus led St. Luke to write his Gospel which has become the possession of the whole Church from the days of the Evangelist; so did the Holy Spirit cause the apostolic function to be divided at this time, and a momentary *murmuring* was made the occasion for the permanent enlargement of the order of the ministry. Amelote.

(4) *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*² Acts ix. 27.

Here we see that the word *ministry* is used for the whole

¹ "There is a threefold fulness of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, according to a threefold capacity of the receivers. (1) *Plenitudo superabundantiæ*, of the fountain in Christ, John i. 16; Col. ii. 9. He had not the Spirit in measure, but above measure. (2) *Plenitudo eminentiæ*, of the stream: so the apostles, those extraordinary officers, had a greater fulness of the Spirit than any since. See the fifth and sixth verses of this

chapter. (3) *Plenitudo sufficientiæ*, of the vessel; this fulness has every member of the body of Christ."—*Leigh*.

² "Rectus ordo est, nec invertendus. Oratio prædicationi præmittitur, tanquam ejus fundamentum: oratio operi, et voci gratiam et efficaciam obtinet? prædicatione languet, quam oratio non firmat, non munit, non animat."—*Noxarius*.

Lorinus.

office in the Church, and not of that office only which we call the diaconate. Here the Apostles speak of their own office as a diaconate (*διακονία τοῦ λόγου*). The highest honour of the Apostles was to serve, their greatest diligence was shown in being able and faithful ministers of *the word*.

Lienard.

Bengel.

By prayer is meant, not merely private prayer, but rather those prayers which the Apostles were called upon to offer up with and for the Church. Here we may note that *prayer* stands before *the ministry of the word*,¹ that is, preaching, as that which attunes the soul of the minister of God and fits him for the due performance of his office of preaching.

Quesnel.

Fidelity in the service of our Divine Master, in the performance of the ministerial offices of the Church, bids us give up everything which in any way hinders these two primal duties of the ministers of Christ, and calls upon us to seek out and to cherish everything which enables us the better to perform these two duties, *prayer and the ministry of the word*.²

Acts viii. 5,
26; xi. 24;
xxi. 8.

(5) *And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:*

Corn. & Lap.

As the *murmuring* had arisen amongst the *Grecians*, that is, amongst the Hellenistic Jews, so we may note that the names of all those who were chosen to be deacons are Greek. It does not, however, necessarily follow from this circumstance that all these disciples were Greeks by birth and language. It has been supposed that some, at least, of these seven had Hebrew names, which St. Luke, writing for Greeks and in Greek, translated into this language. The whole of the seven, indeed, with the exception of Nicolas, would seem to have been Jews by birth, whether Hellenistic or not. He alone is described as a *proselyte of Antioch*, a Gentile who had been converted to the Jewish religion.³ Their

¹ "Isti actioni nos adhærebimus theoricæ, id est, contemplationi. Sed nonne prædicatio est opus misericordiæ, ergo opus activæ? Sol. Actus prædicationis est de activa, sed theorica dicitur propter annexum, scilicet lectionem, orationem et meditationem, quæ sunt partes contemplativæ. In lectione habetur materia prædicationis, in meditatione dispositio vel ordo, in oratione

formalis efficacia, quæ obtinetur per orationem."—*Hugo de S. Charo*.

² "This is doubtless the proper business of a Christian bishop: to speak to God in prayer; to men, in preaching His word as an ambassador for Christ."—*Wesley*.

³ "Nomina hæc omnia sunt Græca, quod non mirum in Alexandrinis. Sed inde non sequitur omnes nos diaconos

Greek names prove nothing as to their race, since many Jews at that time bore Greek names. It has, indeed, been thought that three of them were Hebrews, three Hellenistic Jews, and one a proselyte.

Geiesler,
Ch. Hist.
§ 25.

Stephen is characterized as *full of faith*, not, that is, a faithful man merely, for this was indispensable in every one who sought admission into the Church of Christ, but as one who was full of confidence and trust in God.¹ *St. Philip* is afterwards mentioned as the Evangelist of Samaria, and as the converter of the Ethiopian eunuch. *Nicolas*, the *proselyte of Antioch*, has been supposed to be the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitans; but there is no evidence of this, and it has been denied as strenuously as it has been asserted.² Of the remaining four Scripture makes no other mention than what is found at this place. With reference, however, to their appointment these facts are to be noted, and the lessons derived from them remain for our guidance.

Acts viii. 5,
27.

Rev. ii. 6.

(1) The election was made with deliberation and agreement; the disciples were bidden to *look out*, to investigate the character of those who were appointed.

(2) They were to be influenced and guided by the spirit of brotherly love; those who were directed to choose the seven were to do so as *brethren*.

(3) Those who were to be chosen were to be men dwelling amongst, and known to, the brethren,—*among you*.

(4) Those who were to be chosen were, of necessity, to be men of good character, of *honest report*.

(5) They were not only to be characterized by outward uprightness; they were to be men of sterling piety, *full of the Holy Ghost*.

(6) Since they were to instruct those who were within,

fuisse ex Hellenistis. Nomina Judæorum Lucas forsan Græce extulit. Nicolaus non fuit Judæus natus, sed ad sacra eorum accessit. Genere fuit Antiochenus, ut statim additur. Videtur tamen major pars fuisse ex Hellenistis. Quoniam enim tota rixa inde orta erat quod viduæ Hellenisticæ negligerentur, ideo maxime Hellenistæ præficiendi erant huic muneri.”—*Rosenmüller*.

¹ “Commendatur hic Stephanus, à triplici fide; *Primo*, morali, quæ virtus est fidelitatis; *Secundo*, Christiana, qua et ipse plenè instructus erat, et etiam alios instruebat et generosissimè adversus Judæos propugnabat; *Tertio*, fide miraculorum id est, fide ac fidu-

cia in Deum adeò excellenti, ut etiam miracula patraret.”—*Tirinus*.

² Nicolas is said by some to have founded the impure and heretical sect of the Nicolaitans. Others, however, allege that they merely appealed to his actions in support of their heresy; whilst others deny altogether the charge of impurity and heresy of which he has been accused. See, on the one hand, S. Irenæus, i. 27, S. Hippolytus (*Philosophumena*, p. 259), Tertullian, S. Hilary, and S. Jerome. The charges against him, on the other hand, have been denied by Clemens Alex. Strom. iii. See *Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclesiastiques*, vol. ii. sub nomine.

to convert those without, and to convince the gainsayer, they were to be learned in the Scripture, full of *wisdom*.

(7) Those who were chosen, were elected, not to a post of honour, not to pre-eminence in station, but to labour for the salvation of souls and for the extension of the Church of Christ; they were to be appointed *over this business*, to administer the alms of the faithful, and so to repress the murmurs which had arisen.

Dion. Carth.

Acts i. 24;
viii. 17; ix.
17; xiii. 3.
1 Tim. iv. 14;
v. 22.
2 Tim. i. 6.

(6) *Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

The laying on of hands was a significant act borrowed from the old law. When the priest *laid* his *hands* on the head of the sacrifice he signified thereby that it was set apart and consecrated to God's service;¹ so, when the Apostles *laid their hands* on the heads of these seven they signified the same to the assembled multitude. But the laying on of hands was more than this. It was the means by which grace for their office was conferred upon the seven. It was God's hand which was really laid upon them. The Apostles prayed, and then put forth their hands upon the seven. The hands of man were laid upon the newly-appointed ministers, but the whole work was of God.² His hand it is which in reality touches the heads of those who are duly ordained to the ministry of the Church.

Mariana.

Chrysostom.

The immediate work to which the seven were called was the giving assistance to the Apostles in the distribution of the alms of the Church, but with this they were called to higher and to more sacred duties; and hence we immediately after find Stephen preaching before the people, and Philip going down to Samaria to evangelize the people of that country.³

Corn. & Lap.

(7) *And the word of God increased; and the num-*

¹ See *Hooker* on the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. cap. 66: "Impositio manuum iis temporibus apud Judæos in usu fuit, et usurpata esse ab iis videtur ad exemplum illius, quod Moses, Deo jubente, Josuæ manus suas imposuerit, eumque hoc symbolo coram Israelitis omnibus palam in gravissimo munere regiminis et judicii confirmaverit. Num. xxvii. 28. Hunc morem scuti Apostoli Presbyteris et Diaconis manus imposuerunt, quo ritu, tanquam externo symbolo designata est

tum collatio *potestatis* actu exercendæ, tum *aptitudo*, quæ ad exercitium illius numeris requirebatur."—*Rosenmüller*.

² "ἡ χεὶρ ἐπικείται τοῦ ἀνδρός· τὸ δὲ πᾶν ὁ Θεὸς ἐργάζεται."—*Theophylact*.

³ "ἔστιν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι οὔτε τῶν Διακόνων, οὔτε τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἡ διακονία αὐτῇ· οὐδέπω γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἐπισκοπὸς ἦν, ἀλλ' οἱ ἀπόστολοι μόνον ὅθεν οὔτε Διακόνων, οὔτε πρεσβυτέρων οἶμαι τὸ ὄνομα εἶναι δῆλον καὶ φανερόν."—*Theophylact*.

ber of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

John xii. 42.
Acts xii. 24;
xix. 20.
Col. i. 6.

Now, when the Apostles were freed from the task of ministering to the temporal wants of the people, and were able to apply themselves wholly to prayer and to the ministry of the word, we read that *the word of God increased*, notwithstanding the persecution of the disciples of Christ. Thus when the ministers of God apply themselves to their sacred duties does God give the increase to His Church. So again does the true Church of God increase amidst persecution more than it does under ease and in times of outward prosperity. Members there may, indeed, be added at such times, but it can hardly be said that the *word* increases under the sunshine of worldly prosperity. Now, however, in the city where Christ had been so lately crucified, where the Apostles had been imprisoned and beaten, the Church *increased*, not only with inward faith, but also outwardly in members so as to require additional ministers to aid the Apostles in their oversight of the Church. It was now as of old, when the Egyptians persecuted the people of God, then did the Israelites so greatly increase as to alarm their persecutors. When the high priests and Pharisees, and the people of Jerusalem, were persecuting the converts to Christianity, the *word* was growing (*ὁ λόγος ἤϋξανε*) in strength, and enrolling its adversaries among the ranks of those who *were obedient to the faith*.¹ The *word increased*, then, has a two-fold meaning here.

Menoehius.

Lorinus.

Ho'meister.

Wordsworth.

(1) It tells us that increasing numbers of believers were at that time gathered into the Church, and became *obedient to the faith* in Christ.

Calvin.

(2) It denotes the increase of the virtues of faith and patience in the hearts of the members of the Church, and their *obedience* to the purifying influence of the Spirit of God.

Gloss. interlin.

The word of God increased. The seed sown by the hand of the great Sower now expanded and germinated in the hearts of men.² We are not told that the Apostles by the power

¹ "τῇ πίστει, the faith, faith system, i.e. the gospel; comp. Rom. i. 5; Gal. i. 23, etc."—Hackett.

² "Verbum Dei prædicatum et in corde hominis receptum, efficitur initio mortuum dum veterem hominem occidit, rationem humiliat per fidem, sacrificat corpus abstinencia et continentia: postea intus homo novus quasi adhuc sub terra

latens proponit bona operari: tandem existit, proditque per fructum boni operis foras, ac se ad aliorum exemplum spectandum præbet. Et hoc quidem totum incrementum spirituale, sive generatio fit mirabili quodam modo, quem prædicator qui seminat, et is ipse, in quo semen jactum est, ignorat." —Lorinus.

of their preaching increased the number of the converts to the faith. We are not told that men and women, wearied by the burden of their sin and by the powerlessness of the various creeds which they professed, now came into the Church and thus increased it numerically. It is rather the essential power of the word itself which is here indicated. It increased by its own inherent power, for so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

Lorinus.

Mark iv. 26—
28.Quesnel.
Luke xxiii.
34.Matt. xxvii.
20.

Mark xv. 31.

Chrysostom.

[End of
Epistle for
St. Bartholo-
mew's day.]

And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.¹ This is at once a proof of the power of the word, and of the mightiness of the operation of Divine grace: a testimony to the efficacy of the prayer of Christ upon the cross, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* In this fact we have a visible and memorable token of the mercy of God: even those who had been active in stirring up the people to demand the death of Christ, and had urged them to ask for the release of Barabbas and for the crucifixion of the Messiah; even those who had reviled Him as He hung upon the cross with the taunt, *He saved others, Himself He cannot save*, now unconsciously proved the truth of their own mocking words *He saved others*, He who hung in patience on the cross and refused to come down was yet the Saviour of a great company of the priests. In this has He left us a lesson of the long-suffering of God, and by His example He is still calling upon us not to be impatient nor to despair of the salvation of any sinner, however hardened in unbelief, and however bold in present opposition to the cause of Christ.

(8) *And Stephen, full of faith [or grace]² and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

¹ "Mirum Visum est his interpretibus [i. e. Casaubono, Bezae, et Valckenario] tot sacerdotes Christo nomen dedisse. Sed locus sanus est. Non enim incredibile est, ut probe notarunt Lud. de Dieu et Klosius in Examine Emendatt. Valckenarii in N. T. p. 48. Magnum sacerdotum numerum religionem Christianam admisisse, cum Esra ii. 36—39, quater mille, ducentos et octoginta novem ex captivitate reduces recenseat, qui numerus multum haud dubie proce-

dente tempore auctus sit."—*Kuinoel.*

² The text recept. has *πίστεως*, but *χάριτος* is the generally received reading. It is adopted by Griesbach, Tischendorf, Alford, Wordsworth, and others. *χαριτος* is the reading in A. B. D. κ. a large number of cursive MSS. in the Syr. Erp. Copt. Arm. Vulg. versions. In church hymns, Bas. Didym. Nyss. Proclus. Asterius. Chrys. Aug. Œcumenius reads *χάριτος θεοῦ*, Æth. *χάριτος καὶ πίστεως*.

He was before described as *full of faith and of the Holy Ghost*, now *power* is added. It was not until he had received the grace of ordination to the ministry that we read of his having *power*, and that he did *great wonders and miracles*. With this ordination was given a fresh access of grace for the work of the ministry, and for the fulfilment of his office *among the people*.¹

Verso 5.

Chrysostom.

He was *full of grace* in his own soul, and endued with *power* in preaching and in doing miracles, so that the grace within him was seen and acknowledged by others. He *was full of grace* to live holily, and of *power* to endure the persecution of which he was to be the first victim, as well as to do *great wonders* which attested the truth of his claim to preach to the people. He also wrought *miracles* by which he brought comfort to the sick and distressed to whom he ministered, and doubtless at the same time wrought conviction in the hearts of many before whom they were done.²

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Lyra.

Arias Mont.
Menoehius.

(9) *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called³ the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.*

A great company even of the priests had become obedient to the faith, as well as large multitudes of the people, and now St. Luke relates the outbreak of the persecution which followed. Thus closely are these two united. Thus is the glory of the Church always united with the cross and with sufferings for Christ's sake.

Calvin.

It is not absolutely necessary from the words of this verse to understand that there was more than one *synagogue* used by these five different bodies, and some so explain this passage. Others, however, suppose that two synagogues are meant, that of the *Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians*, who had one in common, and another for the use

Wesley.

¹ "Stephanus plenus fide et Spiritu Sancto ante ordinationem suam in diaconum dicebatur nunc plenus gratia et fortitudine ordinatus et electus nominatur. Nec immerito Stephanus qui interpretatur corona vel coronatus, vocatus est, qui primus post Christum coronandus erat martyrio, quem etiam Lucas fortitudine illustrat, nimirum qui constanter sustinuit usque ad mortem."
—Gangæus.

et d'onction et animé de l'esprit de son ministère, fait plus que cent autres dans l'église. Remplissez-la, seigneur, de ces sortes de ministres; pleins de grace et de force; de grace pour toucher le cœur de vos élus, de force pour ne pas craindre vos ennemis."—Quesnel.

³ τῆς λεγομένης—the so called. St. Luke inserts this word in order to reconcile the ear as it were to this almost unheard of designation."—Hackett.

² "Un seul ministre plein de grace

Humphrey. of people from *Cilicia and Asia*. The Rabbins say there were four hundred and eighty synagogues in Jerusalem, and as the Jews dwelling in Rome, Cyrene, Alexandria, and Cilicia were numerous, and great numbers from all these places came up to the greater feasts of the temple, it is not likely that they possessed only one synagogue, nor even two, in common. What is most probably meant by these words is this, that *certain* from the five synagogues *arose up and disputed with Stephen*.

By the *Libertines* are meant the *Libertini* or Jewish captives who had been manumitted at Rome, and dwelt on the trans-Tiburtine portion of the city.¹ These had many of them been carried into Italy by Pompey the Great, and had been liberated by him, but had been banished by Tiberius. How numerous these *libertini* were we may gather from the fact that four thousand of them were exiled at one time to the island of Sardinia.² In Cyrene the number of the Jews was so great that Strabo says they had gotten into all cities, and that one-fourth of all the people there were Jews. Reference to Cyrene occurs frequently in the writings of St. Luke. He notes that it was a Cyrenian who bore the cross after Christ, and that Jews from *the parts of Libya about Cyrene* were at Jerusalem, and witnesses of the outpouring of the miraculous gift before the disciples at the day of Pentecost. He relates that *men of . . . Cyrene* came to Antioch and *preached the Lord Jesus*, and notes of *Lucius of Cyrene* that he was one of the *prophets and teachers* who was at Antioch. In Alexandria the Jews were so numerous as to possess a large district of that city, and by an edict of Claudius their right to elect and be governed by an Eth-

¹ "Horum Philo mentionem facit in Legat. ad Cai. p. 1014, c. πῶς οὖν ἀπεδέχετο τὴν πέραν τοῦ Τιβέρεως ποταμοῦ μεγάλην τῆς Ρώμης ἀποτομὴν ἣν οὐκ ἡγνόει κατεχομένην καὶ οἰκουμένην πρὸς Ἰουδαίων ῥωμαῖοι δὲ ἦσαν οἱ πλείους ἀπελευθερωθέντες. Αἰχμάλωτοι γὰρ ἀχθέντες εἰς Ἰταλίαν ὑπὸ τῶν κτησαμένων ἠλευθερώθησαν οὐδὲν τῶν πατρίων παράχαράξει βιασθέντες. Quomodo enim Augustus passus fuisset trans Tiberim bonam urbis partem habitari et teneri a Judæis quod non ignorabat, quorum plerique erant *libertini*: quippe qui belli jure in potestatem redacti, ab heris suis manumissi fuerant, nec quidquam patriorum rituum mutare coacti."—*Loesner*.

² "Tacitus, Ann. ii. 85 (A.D. 19),

relates, Actum et de sacris Ægyptiis Judaicisque pellendis: factumque Patrum consultum ut quatuor millia *libertini* generis, ea superstitione infecta, queis idonea ætas in insulam Sardiniam veherentur . . . cæteri cederent Italia, nisi certam ante diem profanos ritus exuissent. In this Josephus agrees, Ant. xviii. 3, § 5, relating a story as one of its causes in which Ida, a freed woman, was the agent of the mischief. Here, then, we have abundant reason for numbers of these Jews, *libertini generis*, having come to Jerusalem, being among the *cæteri* who were ordered to quit Italy: and what place so likely a refuge for Jews as Jerusalem?"—*Alford*. See also *Suetonius* in Tib. c. 36.

narch of their own was recognized. As to Cilicia, the country of St. Paul, we know that there were large numbers of Jews settled in it, and that the freedom of the city had been given to many of them. Again, by Asia is meant the district of Proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital.

Joseph.
Antiq. xiv.
7, § 2; 10, §
1; xix. 5, §
2.

Wordsworth.

No sooner *did* Stephen *great wonders and miracles* than *certain* of these various *synagogues*¹ arose and captiously disputed with him. Thus constantly do we find that the witness from on high, and the signs of Divine power, provoke the enemies of God and Christ. When our blessed Lord wrought miracles among them, because of those very miracles the Jews crucified Him. It was when He had shown His power in raising Lazarus from the dead, *from that day forth they took counsel together to put Him to death*. When Peter and John raised up and healed the lame man they were thrown into prison, and so now, as soon as Stephen had shown *great wonders and miracles*, which should have been accepted as signs of the Divine approbation, then we read of those who first *disputed* with him, and at length urged on the people to stone him to death.

John xi. 53.

(10) *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit*² *by which he spake*.

Exod. iv. 12.
Is. lii. 17.
Luke xxi. 15.
Acts v. 39.

Wisdom may be easily resisted by man, but not when accompanied by *the Spirit*.

Mariana.

They were not able to resist—St. Luke does not say that they yielded to, nor that they desired to accept, the teaching of St. Stephen, but that *they were not able to resist*.³ The desire to refute his arguments was strong within them, the wish to oppose him was still in their mind, but they had not the power—*they were not able*. A proof of the power that was with him animating his words.

Pet. Damian.

¹ "*De Synagoga*—Triplicem usum hæc vox habet in Scriptura, pro tota Judæorum republica [Num. iv. 34, xvi. 2, xxvii. 20, xxxi. 13; Ex. xxxiv. 31]: pro quocumque sive bonorum, sive malorum cætu, immò et Satanæ [Ps. lxxxvi. 14; Ecclus. iii. 30, *Vulg.*; ib. xxi. 9; Apoc. ii. 9, iii. 9]: pro loco in quem multitudo Judæorum conveniebat ad aliqua exercitia spiritualia [Luc. vii. 5]: ut ad prædicationem verbi et legis explicationem diebus sabbatorum [Luc. iv. 15, xiii. 10; Joan. xviii. 20; Act. xiii. 5, xv. 21]; et ad orationem et laudem Dei [Matt. vi.

2; Judith vi. 22]; et ad correctionem publicam peccatorum in lege [Matt. x. 17, xxiii. 34; Marc. xiii. 9; Act. xxii. 19, xxvi. 11]."—*Lorinus*.

² "The wisdom and spirit of Stephen, that is, the wisdom of the Spirit in Stephen." — *Bp. Andrew's* second Whitsunday Sermon (vol. iii. p. 134, Ang. Cath. lib. edit.).

³ "*Non poterant, volebant quidem et conabantur, resistere non tamen acquiescebant, quia non recipit stultus verba prudentum* [Prov. xviii. 2]; *sapientiæ scripturarum, loquebatur cum Dei fiducia et sine timore*."—*Gorranus*.

Hugo de S.
Charo.
Lorinus.

The wisdom in sacred things—his knowledge and skill in the application of Holy Scripture, and *the Holy Spirit* who spake by his mouth. In this was the promise of Christ to His disciples fulfilled. *I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*¹

Luke xxi. 15.
Matt. x. 20.

1 Kings xxi.
10, 13.
Matt. xxvi. 59,
60.

(11) *Then they suborned*² *men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. (12) And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council.*

We have heard him speak blasphemous words. In Holy Scripture blasphemy is either—

(1) To speak evil of that which is good—to impute evil to it, or—

(2) To vituperate, to use abusive words of God or of the children of God, as when Goliath used opprobrious words of David.³

Lorinus.

In charging Stephen with blasphemy *against Moses and against the Lord*, they seem to place Moses before God, as though the things of God were of no great concern to them.

Chrysostom.

It is now Moses whom they consider, it is seldom God. They reverse the order in which their names occur in the law, when *the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord*

Exod. xiv. 31.

and His servant Moses. The Master is here confounded with the servant, or rather the servant is preferred to the Master Himself, the law to the Giver of the law, for when they speak of *Moses* they mean the whole ceremonial and political law which was given through Moses.

Stier.

Lorinus.

(13) *And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :*

The witnesses whom they suborned were *false witnesses*, so

¹ "Hæc sunt insignia militum Christi, fides, gratia, fortitudo in adversis et Spiritus Sanctus donorum omnium largior."—*Salmeron*.

² "ὁπίβαλον, secretly instructed, suborned. It was concerted between them what should be said, and to what point it should be directed."—*Hackett*.

³ "Calumnia est falsum testimonium, ut describitur in lege, seu accusatio mendax. Differt à blasphemia, quia hæc contra Deum, illa contra homines est et est gravissimum peccatum [Exod. xxiii. 1; Lev. xix. 16; Judæ 8, 9; Matt. xxvi. 59, 60]."—*Streso*.

does the first martyr for the cause of Christ resemble his Divine Lord in his sufferings for His sake. And not only in the fact that he was accused by *false witnesses*, but also in the form of their revilings and in this charge of blasphemy does Stephen resemble his Master. They also call him contemptuously, *This man*, as the Jews cried at the trial of Christ, *Not this man*.¹

These men were *false witnesses* not so much that they did not truly repeat the words of St. Stephen, as that they put a false meaning upon them, and wilfully misinterpreted his words. Christ had indeed spoken of the destruction of the city over which He had wept, but He had spoken of it as the work of the Romans, who would not leave one stone upon another. He had indeed spoken of the law as though it were imperfect, but He had added that He had Himself come not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. The *blasphemous words*, however, which were spoken by St. Stephen against *the law*, that is, against the interpretation which the priests and scribes of that time gave to the law, seems to have consisted in his declaring Christ to be the Son of God, whereas the Jews supposed that the Messiah who should come and restore the temporal power of their nation would be a man, great and powerful indeed, but still not a man. *Against this holy place* he had spoken injuriously or blasphemously, by saying that it would be destroyed according to the prediction of his Divine Master; against *the law*, by saying or implying that its ceremonial part and its customs would be changed.² Here, as in the eleventh verse, they seem to have reversed the order in which the *holy place* and the *law*, stood one to another, and to have regarded the place more than the law given by God.

He *ceaseth not to speak*. In these words his enemies were compelled to testify to the single-heartedness of St. Stephen. It was his one, his sole occupation to proclaim salvation to the people through the death of Christ, and to declare the whole will of God.

(14) *For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*

Shall change. Even the false witnesses do not accuse

¹ *Homo iste.* "Contemptum denotat nec loquendi forma, ut notat utraque glossa."—*Lorinus.*

² "*Non cessat loqui.* Exaggeratio et qua persuadere volunt, non semel ut iterum sed sæpius et veluti ex

quodam habitu solitum blasphemare. Oportet verò multoties à Stephano habitum sermonem de religione, vel privatim vel publicè ut hujusmodi testimonium etiam à falsis testibus deponi potuerit."—*Lorinus.*

Augustine.

Lorinus.

Gorranus.

Matt. v. 17.

Corn. & Lap.]

Gangæus.

Stier.

Chrysostom.

Dan. ix. 26.
Acts xxv. 8.

him of saying that Christ should abolish *the customs*. He came, as He Himself declared, not to destroy, but to fulfil the whole law, and to *change* the shadow into the substance.

The accusation is the same as against Christ Himself, and St. Stephen in declaring Christ's message, and citing His words, used them in the manner in which his Master had before used them. As He hung on the cross the crowd that *passed by reviled Him* with the same accusation, *Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself*, though when He said, *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up* He spake of the temple of His body, so when He had spoken of the impending ruin which would befall the city He predicted its fall, but did not denounce it.

Matt. xxvii.
40.

John ii. 19.

Fromond.

(15) *And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

Alford.

Iyra.

Isaiah vi. 6.

Menochius.

Estius.

1 Cor. xiii. 1.

The face of an angel. His face probably lighted up with a Divine radiance,¹ and beaming with beauty and glory given him from heaven in attestation of his innocency of the charge brought against him, and as a witness to the holiness of his life.² His eloquence was also from the same source, and he spake with lips touched by the fire of the Spirit. He was eloquent as an angel with words which reached the heart as though spoken by a messenger from on high. In this way St. Paul speaks of the effectual eloquence of the minister of God as *the tongues of men and of angels*.³

This glory of God shining in the face of man is thrice spoken of in Holy Scripture. It was said of Moses when returning from converse with God in the mount, that *the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of*

¹ "Non explicatur quid Deus apparere fecerit in facie Stephani ob quod facies ejus apparebat tanquam facies angeli."—*Cajetan*.

² "This is not spoken of his natural favour, but rather of his countenance for the present. Guilty persons' faces are wont to be pale, they are wont to stammer in speaking, and show other signs of trembling: Luke shows that there was no such thing in Stephen, but rather a certain majesty shined in him. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 19; 2 Sam. xiv. 17."—*Leigh*.

³ "This expression of the shining of

the face like that of an angel seems to have been proverbial among the Jews; for so Esther speaks to Artaxerxes. I saw thee as an angel of God and my heart was troubled, *ἐπαράχθη ἡ καρδία μου ἀπὸ φόβου τῆς δόξης σου*, from fear of thy glory.—Esther, pro cap. v. 13 [see in LXX]. And the Chaldee Paraphrast on Cantic. i. 4, saith, When Israel made the calf, their visage was black as that of an Æthiopian, but when they repented, and their sin was remitted, the splendour of the glory of their countenance was like that of an angel."—*Whitby*.

Moses for the glory of his countenance. It was spoken of 2 Cor. iii. 7.
 Him who was a prophet greater than Moses—our blessed
 Lord—when on the mount, we read that *He was transfigured*
before the eyes of the Apostles, and His face did shine as Matt. xiii. 2.
the sun. And now we are told that the like glory shone
 in the face of St. Stephen, as though this had been granted
 him in witness of his being a follower of Christ, and in his
 vindication from the charge of speaking *blasphemous words*
against Moses. The splendour of his countenance struck Dion. Carth.
 his enemies with amazement, but it neither removed their
 malice nor abated their persecuting zeal.¹ As with Pharaoh,
 miracles seemed but to harden their hearts. Dives in the
 parable did but deceive himself, as so many others, when
 he thought that if one from the dead should bear the mes-
 sage of God to his brethren living in sin they would repent.
 Here the declaration of the resurrection of Christ from the
 dead seemed only the more to sharpen the anger of the Baxter.
 Sanhedrim, and to steel their hearts against mercy.

This radiation of splendour from the face of St. Stephen
 was—

(1) The beaming forth of that confidence which he had
 that he was in the hands of One who cared for him, and
 therefore that man could not harm him.

(2) It was a reflexion and anticipation of the future glory
 with which the sufferings of this present life are not worthy
 to be compared, the glorious setting of an earthly life Lange.
 made more glorious with the light of eternity.²

¹ "Ils le voyent tous semblable à un
 ange; et tous le vont bientôt traiter
 comme un homme possédé du demon
 de blasphème. Mon Dieu! vous donnez
 souvent des anges à votre Eglise; mais
 souvent aussi il y en a peu qui ayent

des yeux pour les connoître et beaucoup
 qui sont prêts à les lapider."—*Quesnel.*

² *Faciem Angeli præ fulgore ter-
 ribili; vel pulchritudine candoris. Et
 verè Angelus erat, id est, nuncius volun-
 tatis Dei.*"—*Hugo de S. Charo.*

CHAPTER VII.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

TIBERIUS.
PONTIUS PILATE.
CAIAPHAS.

THE speech of St. Stephen contained in this chapter is one of no ordinary difficulty. The obscurities and difficulties which present themselves are, however, due in a great measure to the impatience of the reader, and are not inherent in the speech itself. As might be fairly expected, it has its difficulties, but these perhaps in every instance lie on the surface, and would disappear if critics and apologists would more carefully read the Old Testament Scriptures which St. Stephen here epitomizes. The speech was delivered before the Sanhedrim, a company of men versant both in the law and in the traditions of the fathers, traditions not always preserved in the canonical Scriptures.¹ We should therefore expect to find that allusions to facts and modes of interpretation recognized and accepted by the Rabbins are not so clear to us as they must have been to the Jew, saturated with that lore which was afterwards collected in the two Talmuds of Jerusalem and Babylon. Then, again, the fact that the speech is a brief survey of the whole past history of the nation increases these difficulties or obscurities, and the object which St. Stephen keeps in view not being so much the outer history as the drawing out the spiritual and prophetic significance of the events of history, augments in no small degree the difficulty which we have in closely following the speaker in his rapid glance over the past, and in his linking together cause and effect in his brief survey of God's dealings with the patriarchs of old. We shall, however, better understand the speech if we remember—

(1) That it was spoken before the Sanhedrim, and that

¹ "Fuere procul dubio alia eaque quamplurima ad Israelitarum historiam pertinentia quorum memoria vel aliis monumentis nunc deperditis vel πα-τροπαράδοσις usque ad seras gentis ætates prodita est Nihil ergo est cur nos sollicitos ea habeant quæ, etsi non in vetere Testamento, in hac tamen Stephani oratione leguntur."—*Patri-*
tius.

the doctors who composed this assembly held and taught that God's favour was at least in a great measure limited and restrained to particular persons—the Jewish nation, and that He manifested Himself, if not exclusively, yet in a pre-eminent degree, in a particular place—the temple at Jerusalem.

(2) That St. Stephen was charged with *blasphemy* or contempt of this temple and of the law confessedly of Divine institution and made known by Moses, and also with asserting that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the Holy Place, and set aside or change the customs which Moses the law-giver, appointed by God Himself, had delivered to their fathers.¹ Wordsworth

(3) That the defence of St. Stephen is not a mere recapitulation of the facts of the Jewish history, and an acknowledgment on his part that he held all these as so many true facts. This is only an incidental feature of his speech, not its scope and end. His attention in this defence is not centred on himself, but he seizes the opportunity forced upon him to unfold the teachings of past history to the Jewish people, and to show that the rejection of Christ and the persecution of His disciples had been acted over and over again by the people who had slain the prophets of God, and persecuted His ministers. It is a speech not in defence of himself, but in vindication of his teaching, of which we have no record save in the distorted accusation of his opponents. Olshausen. De Suci. Humphrey.

St. Stephen had taught, and he repeats the same teaching here, that the possession of the law given by God on Sinai, and of the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham, of the temple and of the land of promise, were not exclusive titles to the mercies and the protection of God. That these were not of avail without the obedience of the heart. That God required *not sacrifice* unless with contrition for sin and active *mercy*, love towards our fellow-men. Although he acknowledges God to be the

Ps. li. 17.
Isaiah lvi.
15; lxvi. 2.
Matt. ix. 13.

¹ "Accusatus fuerat tanquam apostata, qui religionem ac cultum Dei evertere tentaret. Sedulo igitur inculcat Deum illum retinere quem semper pluerunt patres. Ita impiæ defectionis imen avertit, hostes autem suos nihil minus quam Legis zelo impelli ostendit. Simulabant enim nihil sibi esse propositum quam Dei gloriam augere. Hanc quoque mendacem jactantiam illis extorquet. Quoniam autem patres semper more habebant et turgebant gentes suæ

gloria, ostendit etiam Stephanus, hinc nullam ipsis esse superbiendi causam, quin potius tot ac tanta fuisse patrum vitia, ut eos pudefieri et humiliari deceat. Quantum ad præcipuum causæ statum et cardinem attinet, quia de templo et ceremoniis agebatur, discrete commemorat electos à Deo fuisse eorum patres in populum peculiarem, priusquam staret templum et natus esset Moses."—*Calvin*.

Verse 2.
Verses 9, 10.

Verse 17.

Verse 25.

John i. 11.

Verses 34, 35.

Rom. ii. 23.

Verse 53.

Verse 43.

Verse 44.

Verses 46, 47.

Verses 48, 49.

Verses 51—
53.

God of Abraham, whose son he himself is, yet he points out that *God appeared unto . . . Abraham* before the covenant of circumcision had been given, whilst he was a stranger to Canaan, and a dweller in a foreign land; that He watched over and was with Joseph when, rejected by his brethren he dwelt in a strange land; that His providence regarded the patriarchs of the nation whilst they dwelt in Egypt, and were *evil entreated* by Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and that He blessed them there, though they dwelt far from the Holy Place. He then passes on to the life of the great lawgiver, and shows that Moses, though a fugitive and rejected by his *brethren*—a type of that prophet like unto Moses, who *came unto His own, and His own received Him not*—was yet chosen by God to be the deliverer and leader of His people. He shows them that though they made their *boast of the law*, yet no sooner had they *received the law by the disposition of angels* than they broke the law and became idolaters, and worshipped Moloch and Remphan, so that whilst prior to the giving of the law of which they boasted, and without it, Abraham was drawn from the midst of idolatry and was accepted by God, they with the law in their hands provoked God, and were in punishment carried away from their land—the land of God—*beyond Babylon*. He tells them that though *the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness* had been fashioned after things in heaven and by command of God, yet this was only for a time, and in place of it David desired to build a temple, and Solomon was permitted to do so, and that even this could not be *the place of rest* to Him who made the heavens His *throne* and earth His *footstool*, for *the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*. At this point it would seem St. Stephen was interrupted, probably by the outcries of the people, and he turns to rebuke those who resisted the words, not of man, but of the Holy Ghost, and who had been *the betrayers and murderers of the Just One*, the Messiah, as their fathers had slain the prophets who foretold of His coming.¹

Here the fury of the people could be no longer restrained, and refusing any longer to listen to his words, they hurried him to death. His speech, however, did not fall to

¹ "On l'accusait de dire que Jésus de Nazareth détruirait le temple, et changerait les traditions qu'on attribuait à Moïse. Il est très-possible, en effet, qu'Étienne eût tenu un pareil langage. Un Chrétien de cette époque n'aurait pas eu l'idée de parler directement contre la loi, puisque tous l'ob-

servaient encore; quant aux traditions Étienne put les combattre, comme l'avait fait Jésus lui-même; or, ces traditions étaient follement rapportées à Moïse par les orthodoxes, et on attribuait une valeur égale à celle de la loi écrite. (Matth. xv. 2 et suiv.; Marc viii. 3; Gal. i. 14)."—Renan. *Les Apôtres*.

the ground, it sank into the heart of one of his persecutors, Saul of Tarsus, and bore fruit not only in his speedy conversion, but afterwards in the speeches which he made, and the Epistles which he wrote to the Churches which had been gathered together by him, or strengthened by his teaching.¹ With more epigrammatic force than truth St. Paul has been spoken of as a "Colossal St. Stephen," since, judging from his speech, St. Stephen must have been a man of rare intellectual power. His influence upon St. Paul is very marked, and much of the Epistle to the Romans, and the whole Epistle to the Hebrews, is but an expansion and comment on this speech, oftentimes in the very words used by the first martyr.²

Bengel.
Stier.
Baumgarten.
Humphrey.
Wordsworth.

(1) *Then said the high priest, Are these things so?*

That is, is it true which these witness against you? This mildness of the high priest in his questioning is in marked contrast with the tone of the high priest's examination of our blessed Lord when He was accused by *two false witnesses*, and the same charge was brought against Him, *Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?* It would seem as though the fear of the people, not yet prepared to persecute the members of the infant Church, or it may be the glory beaming from the face of St. Stephen, restrained for a while the wrath of the members of the Sanhedrim.

Hofmeister.

Matt. xxvi.
60, 62.

Lorinus.

(2) *And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,³*

Judith v. 7.
Acts xxii. 1.

¹ "St. Paul often falls upon the same arguments and uses the same expressions (not very common ones), which are here attributed to St. Stephen. Thus the latter says at ver. 48 of this chapter, *οὐχ ὁ ὑψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ*; St. Paul addresses the Athenians in the same words, *ὁ θεὸς ἐν ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον . . . οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ* (Acts xvii. 24). Again, ver. 53, *ἐλάβετε τὸν λόγον εἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων*: this deserves illustration from Galat. iii. 19, *νόμος . . . διαταγῆς δι' ἀγγέλων*: here the phrase of St. Paul may have been suggested by that of St. Stephen, while the words which are added by

the Apostle, *ἐν χειρὶ μεσίτου*, coincide with and explain ver. 38 of this chapter, *μετὰ ἀγγέλου . . . καὶ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν*. Further, this reference made by St. Stephen (at ver. 44) to Exod. xxv. 40, concerning the tabernacle, may have suggested to the Apostle the use which he makes of the same passage at Heb. viii. 5."—*Humphrey*.

² Compare this speech with the outlines of Jewish History given in Neh. ix. 6—38; in the Book of Judith, v. 5—19; and by St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

³ "Charan—Ita etiam Græcè indeclinabiliter *χαρράν*, Syriacè ܫܪܝܢ

אֱלֹהִים
אֱלֹהִים
Leigh.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Alford.

Exod. xxiv.
17.

Exod. xx. 18.

Deut. v. 22.

Num. vii. 89.

1 Sam. iii. 4.

Lorinus.

1. om. ix. 4.

Men brethren, or simply *brethren*. There is often this redundancy in Hebrew, as in Genesis xiii. 8, where we read in our version *for we be brethren*, but where in the original it is *we are men brethren*. *Men* who should understand God's word; *brethren* who are of the same race as those who have been called to inherit the promises made in Christ, the seed of Abraham; *fathers* who should be instructed in the whole law of God, and who ought, therefore, to be had in respect and reverence. There is a tone of conciliation and of deference in these opening words which remind us strongly of St. Paul's *The God of glory*. He who manifests Himself by glory as He did when *the glory of the Lord, like devouring fire on the top of the mount*, revealed His presence to the children of Israel gathered around Mount Sinai, *appeared to Abraham*. The appearances or revelations of the presence of God which we read of in the Old Testament are either to the ear or to the eye of man. In both these ways, as when *the people saw the thunders and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking*, and knew that God was there, and *spoke unto all the assembly in the mountain out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice*, or by the voice alone, as Moses when he had *gone into the tabernacle of the congregation*, *heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat*, or when from amid the darkness of the temple He *called to Samuel*. Here we are not told how He *appeared* whether by angels or by some other token of *glory*.¹

God is spoken of as *the God of glory*—

(1) As He whose *glory* led the children of Israel through the desert; as He whose *glory* was in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and filled the temple at Jerusalem. It was the boast of the Jews that to them belonged *the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises*.

choron, ut pronunciant hi, qui ut *holem* Hebræum, Syriacum *camets* pronunciant, quanvis alii retinentes pronunciationem Hebræam *Charan* ut nos legant et scribitur Hebraicè per ח cheth fortem aspirationem; quæ cum omittitur, sicut persæpe literæ istæ gutturales propter difficultatem pronunciationis à Græcis et Latinis omitti consueverunt, tunc loco *Charan* legitur *Aram*; hoc autem non est nomen civitatis ut putavit Gagneius sed regionis Syriæ; civitas autem dicitur *Haran* et *Charan*, et geminata litera r, *Charra*

et secundum formam nominis declinat in numero multitudinis, *Charræ*.—*Lorinus*.

¹ “ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης, *the God of the glory* (τῆς, because it was a glory peculiar to Him) = חַדְכֹּר in the Old Testament or among the later Jews חַדְכֹּר, i.e. the light or visible splendour amid which Jehovah revealed Himself, the symbol therefore of His presence (Mey., De Wet., Blms.) Comp. Exod. xxv. 22, xl. 34; Lev. ix. 6; Ezek. i. 28, iii. 23; Heb. ix. 5 etc.”—*Hackett*.

(2) As He who is the one and only Source of all true and enduring *glory* to man, which He derives neither from man whom He has created, nor from the temple which Solomon long after built. *The God of glory* who made His people of old glorious, and will hereafter make glorious the whole spiritual Israel.

Whereas, then, the accusers of St. Stephen were wont to regard *the glory* as inherent in the temple and in the land which God had given to their fathers, he passes by these and attributes all glory to God alone. And by the introduction of this word at this stage of his summary St. Stephen shows that He was a *God of glory* before the temple itself was created, and even before Abraham was called from the midst of idolatry, so that God had His elect ones before the law was promulgated, and before He had made the covenant with Abraham those who served and obeyed Him were acceptable to Him. On this St. Paul, using the same illustration, dwells in his Epistle to the Romans.

And this *God of glory* appeared, he says, *unto our father Abraham*. He recurs again and again to his share with them in the promises made to and in Abraham. He was one with them; though a disciple of Christ, he is not less a Jew and a child of Abraham. He has indeed a greater claim than even his accusers to the benefits appertaining to sonship in Abraham, since the Patriarch was his father by nation as well as in the faith.

And this appearance of which He speaks was when Abraham was in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Charran. He dwelt, as we are told, in Ur of the Chaldees,¹ and when

¹ *Ur of the Chaldees* — In the Hebrew text Ur-chasdim, the original residence of Terah and his family—was long supposed to be represented by a town still known by that name among the Jews—the ancient city of Edessa, now Orfah, or Urfah, situate in the north-western portion of Mesopotamia, is about 39° North lat., and 37° East long. It is some confirmation of the claims of Orfah that the Mahommedans in recognition of the tradition that Abraham dwelt here, have erected a mosque in memory of the Patriarch, and point out a place where they say he was born. A similar tradition, however, clings to many other places, amongst these to Mugheir—Um-mugheir, ‘the bitumened,’ which is now believed to be the Ur or Hur of the book of Genesis.

This is a town about six miles from the present course of the Euphrates, opposite the point where the *Shat-el-Hie* unites with that river, and about 125 from the sea, on which it is believed that it once stood; its inland position being due to the increase of land along this coast. The first-named town is not situate in the real Chaldæa: the low country near the Persian Gulf, in which the best and earliest Jewish authorities agree in placing Ur of the Chaldees. *Mugheir*, however, is in Chaldæa proper. It was formerly the capital of a powerful monarch whose dominions extended as far north as Niffer. The name of this monarch, which occurs on the bricks at Mugheir, is Uruk. The correctness of this reading, however, is very doubtful. (See in *Trans. of Bibl.*

Sionnet.

Œcumenius.

Chrysostom.

Œcumenius.

Corn. & Lap.

Hofmeister.

See at verses
11, 12, 15,
19, 38, 39,
44.

Stier.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Fromond.

Gen. xv. 2, 3.

called from that country, he settled with his father and his brother, and the family of his deceased brother, in Harran, or Charran. This place was long supposed to be Charras, famous in after-times for the signal defeat of the Romans under Marcus Crassus in the Parthian War.¹ This identification of Charras with Charran, however, has never seemed satisfactory to commentators, since it is hardly in the way from Ur to Canaan. For these reasons it has been conjectured that Abraham directed his steps to some spot in the Syrian Mesopotamia, the country around Damascus, and here recent discovery has given us the knowledge of a town once, judging from its ruins, of considerable importance, and still known by the name of Hauran. This place is on the high-road from Ur to Canaan, and on the borders of the land afterwards occupied by the descendants of Abraham. If this be the Charran or Harran where Abraham dwelt, and where after his departure to dwell in Canaan his brother Nahor's family continued to reside, then this passage in the life of Abraham, which has been a perplexing one to students, is at once made clear. His steward Eliezer is spoken of as *one born in his house*, and is yet called *Eliezer of Damascus*. It is hard to understand how this could be if the Harran where Abraham dwelt had been in the tract of country between the Tigris and the Euphrates, but these passages become perfectly intelligible if Abraham settled, as other reasons make it probable that he did, either in the Syrian Mesopotamia, the tract of ground lying between the two rivers Abana and Pharpar, in the territory of Damascus, or in this country to the south of Damascus, which is still known by the name of Hauran.²

When he was in Mesopotamia. The bearing of these words on the argument of St. Stephen is this. God's grace and mercy is in no way limited to Judæa—He appeared to Abraham, and He showed His favour to him in a land which worshipped Him not, in a place where was no temple to the

Archæol. Soc. vol. i. p. 34.) Mugheir was for ages regarded as a city of special sanctity, and the dead were brought from great distances to be buried here, so that it is in the main a city of tombs. The ruins of a large temple dedicated by Uruk to *Hurki*, the moon-god,—from whom the city derives its name—still remains to attest the ancient greatness of the city. See *Rev. Geo. Rawlinson in Smith's Dictionary*. In his *Bampton Lectures* (p. 300) Mr. Rawlinson speaks

of Mugheir as being "beyond all reasonable doubt" Ur of Chaldea, the ancient capital of the Chaldeans, and the place from whence Abraham was called.

¹ "Assyrias Latio maculavit sanguine Carras."—*Lucan, Pharsalia*, lib. i. 105.

"—when Crassus sadly slain
With Roman blood did Asian Charan
staine."—*May*.

² "See on Harran or Charran, note A at the end of this chapter.

one God, where was no sacrifice, which was not the promised land, so that His revelation at the first and His care was shown in other lands than those where afterwards the patriarchs, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, inhabited, and one to whom He *appeared* was not a Jew, but a Chaldæan, so that the gifts and mercies of God are not confined to the country of Judæa, nor to this city Jerusalem, nor even to the Jewish race. With these words of St. Stephen we may compare the argument used by St. Paul—circumcision is not an abiding ordinance, nor does it limit in any way the mercies of God, since Abraham was called, and received the promise because of his faith, *he being yet uncircumcised*.

Chrysostom.
Œcumenius.

Rom. iv. 12.

(3) *And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.*

Gen. xii. 1;
xv. 7.
Neh. ix. 7.

God's first call to Abraham was when he was *in Ur of the Chaldees*.¹ This call was not only obeyed by Abraham, but by his father Terah and all his house, so that it would seem that Terah acknowledged the Lord as Lot his grandson also did. For some reason with which we are not acquainted they halted for a time at Haran, and so long as Terah lived his whole family continued to dwell there. When, however, his father died, then came the call to *get thee . . . from thy kindred*, and hence whilst these lived on at Haran Abraham, called by God, moved into the land which his children afterwards possessed. There are, then, two calls, which, however, it is equally correct to consider but one, since the object of the first call was only fulfilled when, in obedience to the second call, Abraham settled in Canaan.² Indeed, it is ex-

Gen. xv. 7.
Neh. ix. 7.

Gen. xi. 31.

Whitby.

Calvin.

Gen. xxiv. 4.

¹ In an article in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible* it is said "no less than twelve of his references to the Mosaic history differ from it either by variation or addition," and the writer gives us the first two of these variations or additions. "(1) The call of Abraham *before the migration* to Haran (vii. 2), not, as according to Gen. xii. 1, in Haran. (2) The death of his father after *the call* (vii. 4), not, as according to Gen. xi. 32, before it." St. Stephen has here made neither the slightest variation from, nor the least addition to, the account in the book of Genesis. He does not say that he is quoting from Gen. xii. 1, or that he only knew of this passage. In Gen. xv. 7 it is expressly

said that God brought Abraham out of *Ur of the Chaldees*, and that in order to give him the land of Canaan, and such bringing out was a call to him. This obvious explanation is suggested by the use of the pluperfect tense in the English version of Gen. xii. 1. God had said to him before, *Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred*: and He repeated to him after the death of Terah the same command.

² "Videtur Stephanus sequi perpetuam Judæorum traditionem, qui bis Abrahamum vocatum esse statuunt. Bereschit R. xxxix. 8, 'Rabbi Juda dixit לך לך (i.e. *Lech lech* non *Lech lecha*) Abi, abi, bis dictum est: semel ex Mesopotamia et semel ex Syria

Gen. x. 31.

Whitby.

Gen. xii. 1.

Judith. c. 6—
9.Cassian in
Coll. 3, c. 1.

pressly stated that the departure from Ur was in order to go into Canaan, *they went forth . . . from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there*; then when Terah his father was dead, and not until then, we read of the command to Abraham to separate from his father's house. It may be that his faith was strengthened by his obedience to the first command of God *Get thee out of thy country*, and that when this was so strengthened he received and could obey the command to the greater act of self-sacrifice, *Get thee from thy kindred and from thy father's house*. With these words of St. Stephen we may compare those of Achior to Holofernes *This people are descended of the Chaldeans: and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the God of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea. For they left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew: so they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days. Then their God commanded them to depart from the place where they sojourned and to go into the land of Chanaan where they dwell*.

When God called the father of the faithful to give this example of obedience to His commands, he at the same time afforded by his ready obedience an example to us. In these words God calls us to fly—

(1) From the riches and cares of earth—*get thee out of thy country*.

(2) From our *kindred*, so long as they serve other gods and entice us to idolatry. We must fly from the conversation and fashion of that world which is *kindred* to us.

(3) From our *father's house*, from the carnal desires of our nature, which we inherit by descent from earthly fathers.¹

These are substantially the same ties which prevented those called to the supper of the Lord in the parable from obeying His call: the piece of land, earthly possessions

Naboris. Extat etiam Philonis libellus de migratione Abrahami. Talia plura in hac Stephani oratione reperiuntur.”
—Rosenmüller.

¹ “Abbas Paphnutius apud Cassianum (Coll. iii. 1), observat renunciationis genus triplex in hac vocatione primum, quo universis bonis temporalibus nuncium remittimus: alterum, quo etiam cupiditates earum rerum exuimus: tertium quo mentem animumque ab omni rerum visibilium studio et cogitatione, ad rerum invisibilium et cœles-

tium contemplationem et amorem traducimus. De primo dixit Deus ‘*Ex de terra tua*, id est, de facultatibus mundi hujus opibusque terrenis. De secundo dixit *de cognatione tua*, id est, de conversatione et moribus, vitiisque prioribus, quæ nobis à nostra nativitate cohærentia velut affinitate quadam e consanguinitate cognata sunt. Tertio dixit, *de domo patris tui*, id est, de omni memoria mundi hujus, rerumque mundanarum, quæ perpetuò nostrorum oculorum occurrunt obtutibus.”—Lorinus.

the five yoke of oxen, the sensual affections; the wife, the cares and softness of domestic life. It is evident though Terah obeyed the call given to Abraham, yet idolatry still clung to his descendants, and it may be for this reason the command was given to Abraham, *Get thee from thy kindred.*

Gen. xxxi. 19,
30.

(4) *Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye¹ now dwell.*

Gen. xi. 31;
xii. 4, 5.

We have here the first of the difficulties, as they are called, in St. Stephen's speech. In examining it let us bear in mind the audience before whom it was uttered, men versant in all the minutiae of the letter of Holy Scripture, so that the difficulty could be none to them, otherwise they would not have allowed it to pass uncorrected. The difficulty is thus stated. We read in the book of Genesis, *Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.* After the death of Terah the same record says that *Abram departed*, that is, as is evident from the history, and as St. Stephen states, *when his father was dead*; and that *Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.* Now the seventy years before Terah begat a child added to the age of Abram make an hundred and forty-five years, and yet it is expressly said, *the days of Terah were two hundred and five years.*² This was early felt to be a difficulty, and accordingly the Samaritan Pentateuch gives the age of Terah as an hundred and forty-five. This, however, seems to be an alteration made on account of this very difficulty. The Hebrew text and the Septuagint version, together with the Targums and Josephus, all concur in making the age of Terah two hundred and five years. Let us examine the Old Testament and discover whether the difficulty is one in the text, or is one arising out of our own hasty conclusions. Now when we read that *Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran*, this cannot, from the nature of the case, mean that in one year these three sons were born, any more than when we read, *Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth*, we are to understand that these three sons were born at the same

Gen. xi. 26.

Gen. xii. 4.

Gen. xi. 32.

Gen. v. 32.

¹ *Vos.* "Non ego quia terram et omnia terrena cum apostolis reliqui et vicinus morti ad cœlum propero. Ita glossa."—*Corn. à Lapide.*

Ye. As a Hellenist St. Stephen was

probably not an inhabitant of Canaan, and hence the appropriateness of the pronoun *ye*, not *I*.

² See on this verse *Lightfoot* in *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ.*

time. It simply means that Terah's first son was born when his father was seventy years old.

Which, then, of these three sons was born when Terah was seventy years old? which was the eldest son of Terah? It is impossible that it could have been Abram. It is most probable that he was the youngest of the brothers. It is the practice of Jewish and other genealogists to name the members of a family in the order of their importance or relation to the reason for their being named.¹ Here the genealogy is given in order to trace the relation of the family of Israel up to Noah, and since this family descended from Noah through Abraham, his name would naturally stand first in the record, just as the name of Shem stands before those of Ham and Japheth though he was younger than Japheth. The Jews were descended from Shem, not from Japheth, and hence he is named first. Ham is probably named second because he was the father of Canaan and of the people whom the Israelites dispossessed.² Josephus, however, though naming Shem first, as the progenitor of his race, gives the order Shem, and Japheth, and Ham. In the same way we read of *Isaac and Ishmael*, though Ishmael was the elder. We know, however, that Abram was younger than his half-brother Haran, since he married Sarai his daughter,³ and she was only ten years younger than her husband. Her father, then, was older than his half-brother Abram, and judging from the difference of age between Sarah the daughter of Haran and Abraham, it is likely that Haran was sixty or seventy years older than his younger and half-brother, as Shem was one hundred years younger than his brother Japheth; and if so,—and independent of all attempts to reconcile St. Stephen's speech with the original record in Genesis this is the most probable conclusion—

¹ "Non defuit causa cur Nachor, et Aram scriptura meminerit. Nachor quidem quia de ipsius genere fuit Rebecca quæ nupsit Isaac et Lia et Rachel; unde propagatum genus Israëliticum; Aram verò quia ex illo ortus Loth, de quo postea non pauca; et Sara quam duxit Abraham, alioqui non parum obscuritatis sacra haberet historia."—*Gasp. Sanchez.*

² So long as Barnabas and Saul were equal in the work of the ministry, this is the order of their names. See Acts xi. 30; xii. 25; xiii. 2; xiv. 14; xv. 12, 25; but when Saul had become Paul, and his distinctive mission was apparent, then the names are often transposed,

and the apostles are spoken of as Paul and Barnabas. Acts xiii. 43, 46, 50; xv. 2, 22, 35.

³ At Genesis xi. 29. The Targum of Palestine reads, "Haran the father of Milcha, and the father of Iska, who is Sara;" and Josephus (*Antiq. Book I. chap. vii. § 1*) says, "Now Abram, having no son of his own, adopted Lot his brother Haran's son and his wife Sarai's brother;" and the same writer (*Antiq. Book I. chap. xii. § 1*), in reference to the conduct of Abraham at the court of Abimelech of Gerar (*Gen. xx. 12*), represents the Patriarch declaring her to be "his brother's daughter."

1 Chron. i. 4, 8-16.

Gen. xlviii. 13-20.

Antiq. i. 4, § 1; ib. 6, § 4.
Gen. xiv. 9.
1 Chron. i. 28.
Gen. xx. 12.

Gen. xvii. 17.

then there can be no difficulty as to the age of Terah.¹ The numbers given are seventy as the age of Terah at the birth of his eldest son, and seventy-five as the age of the younger son of Terah's at his father's death, and assuming, as is probable, that Haran was sixty years older than his son-in-law Abram, we have here the whole number, two hundred and five, the age of Terah.

Antecedent to any question as to these words we should have expected to find that Abraham, the chosen father of the children of God, was the younger and not the elder son of Terah, when we remember that this choice of the younger in preference to the elder is a common feature in God's dealings with man: Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Judah, and David were all younger sons, and for this reason Ephraim was preferred by Divine direction to Manasseh.²

(5) *And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and³ to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.*

Gen. xii. 7;
xiii. 15;
xv. 8, 18;
xvii. 8;
xxvi. 3.

How, then, it has been asked, could he have obtained the possession of a burial-place and yet have *none inheritance* in the land? The answer to this is very simple and obvious. What he so obtained he got by purchase, and not by inheritance. Nor is it clear that the land so acquired would be for more than a term of years, probably for his life, or so long as he dwelt in the land. We know so little of the tenure by which land was held at that time and in that country, that it would become us to speak with any certainty. It may, however, be doubted whether the member of a family or tribe had the power of disposing in perpetuity

Gen. xxiii. 3,
—20.

¹ See *Biscoe* on the Acts of the Apostles, p. 545 (edition 1829).

² A minor difficulty has been created I believe by *Dean Alford* at this point, at least I have not met with it elsewhere. His words are, "The way in which the difficulty has been met by Wordsworth and others, viz. that we have no right to assume that Abram was born when Terah was 70, but may regard him as the youngest son, would leave us in this unsatisfactory position: Terah in the course of nature begets his son Abram at 130 (205—75), yet this very son Abram regards it as incredible that he himself should beget a son at 99 (Gen. xvii. 1, 17)." This is a fair speci-

men of the way in which difficulties are created. Abram does not "regard it as incredible that he himself should beget a son at 99," but that one who was ninety-nine years old should have a son born to him by a wife who was ninety; and his incredulity is reproved not by affirming that he should beget a child at this age, which was too common an occurrence to require notice, but that *Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed.* Gen. xvii. 19.

³ "*Et semini ejus post ipsum*—Hoc est, posteris ejus. Particula *et* non copulative sed identice hic accipitur pro, *hoc est*, ut recte notat Carthusianus."—*Fromond.*

of tribal land to a stranger. Be this, however, as it may, such a purchase of a burial-place was not a gift of an inheritance from the hand of God, and that alone is here spoken of¹

Lorinus.

Heb. xi. 8.
Baumgarten.
Gen. xii. 6.

The greatness of Abram's faith is shown in this. Though his wife was barren, though he had at this time no child, yet he believed the promise of God, that his children should be possessors of a land in which he had at that time *none inheritance*, and that he gave up his father's land and set out, *not knowing whither he went*, and that he settled in a land then occupied, which therefore it was unlikely that his seed should possess. Hence the significancy of the words in Genesis, *and the Canaanite was then in the land*.

Canaan is always spoken of as a type of the heavenly kingdom. Had, then, Abraham, the father of the faithful, obtained an *inheritance* in the land by purchase and not by the gift of God, it could not be said that he obtained it of free grace, and not by his own works. Otherwise the mode in which the typical land of promise was obtained would make it likely that the antitype itself, the spiritual Canaan, was to be sought for by purchase, and obtained by our merits and works, and not from the unmerited bounty of God.²

Gen. xv. 13,
16.
Exod. xii. 40.
Gal. iii. 17.

(6) *And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.*

The difficulty in this case is different from that in an earlier verse. It is one entirely arising out of the conciseness of St. Stephen's speech. We do not know the term

¹ "Non possedit speluncam quasi hereditatem, scilicet ut vivus eam quasi prædium coleret vel incoleret, sed ut sepulturam in qua mortuus quiesceret. Sepulchrum enim non est hereditas nec domus, vel ager virorum, sed potius crypta subterranea mortuorum. Ita Glossa."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

² Dr. Saml. Davidson, who has accumulated every objection which can be raised against the authenticity of the Acts of the Apostles, mentions as one of the "many historical mistakes" which are to be found in St. Stephen's speech, that which occurs in this verse. His words are—"The narrative of Abraham's purchase in Gen. xxiii. disagrees with the statement that he

did not possess a foot of the promised land" (*Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 236). But this is a statement which does not occur in St. Stephen's speech. He says that God "gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on," but we nowhere read that Abraham "did not possess a foot of the promised land." We are told that he did possess land, that for a sepulchre, not, however, as a gift from God, but by purchase. What is purchased is not given, what is given is not purchased. There is, then, no disagreement here with what is elsewhere said, as to Abraham not having received from God the gift of an inheritance.

from which the four hundred years should be reckoned. Some begin at the date of the promise made to Abraham, which, according to the usual estimate, is a little more than four hundred years before the passage of the Red Sea. Others reckon from the birth of Isaac, and estimate this to have taken place four hundred and five years before the deliverance from Egypt.¹ And as the practice in many parts of Holy Scripture is to speak in round numbers, this may be the date referred to by St. Stephen.² This difficulty, if indeed there are minds to whom it can be a difficulty, entirely arises from our ignorance of the moment from which St. Stephen begins his calculation, and also from our having more than one means by which we may arrive at the same number. St. Paul, speaking of the covenant and promise made to Abraham, says that *the law was four hundred and thirty years after*. We have, however, no means of ascertaining whether St. Stephen is speaking of the same period as St. Paul. Be the time, however, what it may from which St. Stephen begins his reckoning, it includes within it *the sojourn in a strange land*, that is, in Canaan, *a strange country*, in which Abraham had *none inheritance*; *no, not so much as to set his foot on*, and also that in Egypt, where the descendants of Abraham were brought into bondage and were evil entreated; and these two, *the sojourn in a strange land*, and *the bondage in Egypt*, was, according to the best calculation, about four hundred years.³

Sylvetra.

Menochius.

Gal. iii. 17.

Heb. xi. 9.

Lorinus.

Markland.

(7) *And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.*

Exod. iii. 12.

Will I judge, or visit with my judgment, will punish, as God did by the plagues with which He visited the land of

¹ "Recta chronologia demonstrat ab ortu Isaac, qui fuit primum semen Abraham, ad quod semen pertinent verba, quæ Stephanus commemorat et non ad personam Abraham, usque ad ingressum Hebræorum ex Egypto solos præterisse annos quinque supra quadringentos, etsi, more scripturæ, minor numerus prætereatur."—*Lorinus*.

² "Scriptura sæpè ponit numeros integros et rotundos, præsertim centenarios, etiam pauculi iis desint vel superint. Sic enim dicimus nos vidisse centum milites etiamsi duo vel tres huic

numero desint. Sensus enim est: vidi centum, id est, circitur centum plus minus centum. Pari modi hi anni præcisè numerantur quadringenti infra cap. xiii. 20, et Genes. xv. 13."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

³ "In this passage *ἔτη τετρακόσια*, must be referred to *ἔσται πάροικον*, not to *κακώσουσιν αὐτό*."—*Humphrey*. "From the call of Abraham to the deliverance from Egypt was 430 years. Gal. iii. 17. Half of this time, or 215 years, they were in Egypt. But they also sojourned, as in a strange land, in Canaan. Heb. xi. 9."—*Elsley*.

Egypt, and by the evils which befell the nation through the hard-heartedness of its prince;¹ and *after that*, according to the original promise made to Abraham, *in the fourth generation they shall come forth from Egypt and come hither again* and freed from bondage to Pharaoh, and from all the oppression of the Egyptians, *shall serve no longer a hard task-master, but ME*, whose service is perfect freedom.

Gen. xvii. 9—11; xxi. 2—4; xxv. 26; xxix. 31; xxx. 5; xxxv. 18, 23. (8) *And he gave him the covenant of circumcision and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.*

Though the rite of circumcision is said not to have been peculiar to the descendants of Abraham, yet *the covenant*, of which the rite of circumcision was a pledge, was given by God to Abraham and to his seed. The typical and sacramental character of this rite was affixed to it by the covenant which God had made to Abraham.

Arias Mont. Keeping in view the scope of St. Stephen's argument here reminds the Sanhedrim and the rest of his auditors that this covenant, and the magnificent promises made to Abraham, of which his descendants boasted, were made when he was yet uncircumcised and in reward to his faith, and that the covenant itself was the sign and acknowledgment of that faith which he already possessed, *who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.*

Gen. xxxvii. 4, 11, 28; xxxix. 2, 21, 23; xli. 37; xlii. 6. Ps. cv. 17. (9) *And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, (10) And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom² in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.³*

¹ *Judicabo ego. Judicio condemnatorio, quo puniam eos pro meritis suis, per plagas ægyptiacas et demergendo exercitus eorum in mare rubrum.*—Fromond.

² "In his duobus verbis *gratiam et sapientiam* est hypallage. Nam sapientia qua præditus fuit Joseph causa illius favoris fuit, quanquam duo fuisse distincta beneficia fateor. . . . *Sapientia*

non tantum donum prophetiæ significat in somniis interpretandis sed in dando etiam consilio prudentiam: utrumque enim ponit Moses."—Calvin.

³ "*His house* means the king's palace, from which, in the East, all the acts of Government emanate. In other words, Joseph was raised to the office of vizier, or prime minister."—Hackett.

The evil consequences of envy is shown in the terrible sins which the Bible records to have sprung from this root and to have been committed by brethren. Thus through envy, because the sacrifice of Abel was accepted and his was not, Cain slew his brother. Hence, *moved with envy*, his brethren *sold Joseph into Egypt*, and covered this sin by lying to their father. When we envy and injure others, it is our brethren whom we so injure. *A man's foes*, according to our Lord's words, are *those of his own household*, and they who are of one blood are not always of one spirit.

The Lord was with him—with his brethren were Canaanish friends and seducers, but with Joseph was God, though he was in the midst of sufferings in Egypt. *And so God delivered him out of all his afflictions*, from the hands of his brethren when they sought his life, from the pit into which he had been cast, from the hand of the slave-merchants of Midian, from the wiles of the wife of Potiphar, from the danger of death because of her accusation, and from the dungeon into which he had been thrown.¹ He it was who *gave him favour* in the eyes of Pharaoh, so that his *wisdom* was acceptable to him. This *wisdom* was not only that by which he was able to interpret the dreams of the chief butler and chief baker, and of Pharaoh himself, but also that prudence by which he was able to provide for, and so mitigate the evils of famine.

In citing the case of Joseph, St. Stephen does but continue his argument. Your fathers, *the patriarchs*, sold Joseph into Egypt and persecuted him, as you have persecuted Christ to the death. As your fathers sinned in the one case, so have you in the other; and as Joseph was not less a patriarch because of what he suffered from the *envy* of his brethren, so is Christ not less the Messiah and the deliverer of His people because with wicked hands ye have put Him to death.

(11) *Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.* (12) *But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.*

Joseph was in many of the particulars of his life a type of Christ. He was the deliverer of his people, though seem-

¹ "Exemplum hic habes, ut tribulationibus variis vexatus patiens sis, unquam desperes, perpetuo illud cogitans quod Dominus de pio tribulato

dicat, *Cum ipso sum in tribulatione eripiam eum et glorificabo eum* [Ps. xci. 15]."—Hofmeister.

Gen. iv. 3—8.
Gen. xxxvii.
29—35.

Matt. x. 36.
Lange.

Gen. xxxix. 2,
3, 21.
Stier.
Gen. xxxvii.
20.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Sylveira.

Calvin.

Wordsworth.

Gen. xxxvii.
27.

ingly he was removed from all chance of this when at the counsel of Judah he was sold into slavery. His humiliation was but the way in which it was needful for him to pass to his exaltation, and because he was compelled to take the form of a servant, therefore did God raise him to great power. But Joseph is also a type of Christ, who, when there was a *famine over all the face of the earth*, and mankind hungered, even if unknowingly, for *the bread of life*, came into the world *the very bread from heaven*, in order that He might satisfy the needs of His people, and He did so because He had become their brother, and knew *His brethren* though *they knew not Him*.¹

Gen. xli. 56.

John vi. 32.

Gen. xlii. 8.

There was *great affliction* to Jacob and his household. Even the servants of God experience the common miseries of life, and for their purification are made to endure *great affliction*.

Bengel.

(13) *And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.* (14) *Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.*

Baumgarten.

Gen. xlii. 10.

John i. 11.

Gen. xxxvii. 8.

Matt. xxvi.
64.

It is the typical character of Joseph, the way in which he foreshadowed Christ, that St. Stephen set before the eyes of his accusers. Here he points out the fact that the patriarch of old was unknown *to his brethren*. They came and saw him and yet they knew him not; it was not until they stood before him *the second time* that he *was made known to his brethren*. In this is he a type of Christ, who *came unto His own, and His own received Him not*. He was a stranger to those whom He came to feed with bread and to deliver from the house of bondage, and those who rejected Him and would not have Him to *reign over them* shall yet come to stand before His throne, and acknowledge Him then as their ruler. *Henceforth shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

Here occurs another of the difficulties in St. Stephen's speech. It is one, however, which is in a large measure, if not wholly, a difficulty because of the conciseness of the survey

¹ "Le bled en Egypt c'est Jesus-Christ le grain de froment, le froment des élus incarné dans le monde, et connu par la foi qui vient de l'ouïe. Les Juifs enfans de Jacob, conviez les premiers par les Apôtres d'aller à Jesus-Christ, n'ont point eu d'yeux

pour le connoître, ils le connoîtront à la fin du monde quand il leur sera annoncé le seconde fois, lorsque la plénitude des Gentils figurez par Pharaon, sera arrivée à la connoissance du Sauveur du monde."—*Quesnel*.

which St. Stephen takes of the history of the Jewish nation. In the narrative of the coming of Jacob into Egypt we read : *All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were threescore and six ; and the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were twenty souls : all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.* Here the Septuagint reads, *All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came with Jacob into Egypt, were seventy-five souls,*¹ and St. Stephen, using as he does throughout his speech this version, speaks of *threescore and fifteen souls*. The question is whether the Septuagint is wrong, and whether St. Stephen in following it has made a mistake. In Genesis we read that the direct descendants of Jacob, those *which came out of his loins, . . . were threescore and six souls*, and their names stand recorded in the account of the descent into Egypt. The same record then adds, that counting Joseph and his two sons and Jacob himself, *all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.* The Septuagint version, however, it will be noted, and St. Stephen in quoting it, speak expressly not of the souls only *which came out of the loins of the Patriarch*, but of *all the kindred whom Joseph summoned to come down to him as threescore and fifteen*. Now, since those *which came out of the loins* of Jacob and accompanied him into Egypt were sixty-six, if we add to these the Patriarch himself, and eight wives of his sons, or, excluding the Patriarch, nine wives, in either case the number will be seventy-five, according to the text of the Septuagint, as quoted by St. Stephen.² Unless it can be shown that neither of those suppositions can be correct, no one can in fairness charge the speaker with making a mistake. Now we know incidentally that Judah's wife was already dead. It is probable, from the mention of the son of a concubine in this list, that the wife of Simeon was also dead,³ and if Jacob be included, or

Gen. xlv. 26,
27.

Gen. xlv. 8—
26.

Leigh.

Gen. xxxvii.
12.

Gen. xlv. 10.

Hardouin.

¹ "Πᾶσαι δὲ ψυχὰι αἱ εἰσελθοῦσαι τὰ Ἰακώβ εἰς Αἴγυπτον, οἱ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ, χωρὶς τῶν ναικῶν υἱῶν Ἰακώβ, πᾶσαι ψυχὰι ἡκουταῖε· υἱοὶ δὲ Ἰωσήφ οἱ γενόμενοι αὐτῷ ἐν γῇ Αἴγυπτου, ψυχὰι πέντε· πᾶσαι ψυχὰι οἶκον Ἰακώβ εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς Αἴγυπτον, ἑβδόμηντα πέντε."—LXX.

² "That these wives were a part of those that were called by Joseph is certain, because he called Jacob and his household, and all that he had, Gen. v. 11. He sent waggons for their

wives, v. 19, and the sons of Jacob carried their wives in them, chap. xlv. 5. And therefore Josephus gives the words of Joseph thus, Bring your wives, and your little ones, and all your kindred hither (Antiq. Book II. ch. 6, § 10). And that the words συγγενεῖς and συγγένεια belong to wives we learn from Lev. xviii. 14, xx. 20; Josh. vi. 23, as well as from Josephus."—Whitby.

³ "Simeoni, cap. xlv. 10, dicitur fuisse Saul filius Chananitidis, probat uxore tunc caruisse eum, cum postre-

if one other of his sons had buried his wife, the numbers of the kindred, as distinguished from the brothers and sisters of Joseph, would be as stated by the Septuagint and by St. Stephen.

(15) *So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers,* (16) *And were carried over into Sychem,¹ and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.²*

In tracing the argument of St. Stephen we may note that what he implies here is this, that no such special sanctity belonged to Jerusalem as that God must needs appear there beyond or before all other places. God, who manifested Himself first to Abraham in a heathen land, the Chaldean Mesopotamia, appeared again to him, and for the first time in this his new country, not at Hebron, but at Sychem, a city which at the time St. Stephen was speaking belonged to the Samaritans. Then, also, it was not in Jerusalem, the city of David, that the bones of Joseph and of the other patriarchs rested,³ so that as God sanctified by His appearance first Chaldea before He so sanctified Canaan, in this way Sychem was preferred to Hebron, and Samaria to Judæa.

Wordsworth.

In these verses occur what many persons regard as the chief difficulties in the speech of St. Stephen: the difficulties however, seem to arise not out of any contradiction to the account in the Old Testament, but from our inacquaintance

mun hunc filium genuit ex Chanani- tide, non uxore . . . Benjamin, uxorem nondum habuit. Erat comparate ad fratres suos adhuc, *puer parvulus*. Gen. xlix. 20."—*Hardouin*.

¹ "I would point these verses thus : *Καὶ ἐτελεύτησεν αὐτὸς, καὶ οἱ πατέρες, καὶ μετετίθησαν εἰς Συχὲμ· καὶ ἐτέθησαν ἐν τῷ μνήματι, ὃ ὠνήσατο Ἀβραὰμ. κ.τ.λ.* Bp. Barrington; and so Mr. Markland."—*Bowyer*.

² τοῦ Συχὲμ — the ellipsis would ordinarily be supplied by *son*—the son of Shechem. But see note ⁴, p. 213.

³ "It was very commonly and without any kind of doubt received among the Jews that the bones of the twelve patriarchs, as well as those of Jacob, were carried out of Egypt into Canaan. It is written, I will go down with thee

into Egypt, and even in going up I will make thee to go up (Gen. xli. 4). What are we taught by *even in going up*? He saith, 'I will make thee go up, and I will make all the other tribes to go up too, teaching thereby that every tribe should carry up the bones of the patriarch of his tribe with it' (Hierosol. Sotah. fol. 17, 3). 'The bones of all the patriarchs were carried out of Egypt, and buried in the land of Canaan: as it is written, and ye shall carry up my bones with you. Gen. i. 25' (Gloss in Bava Kama, fol. 92, 1). Thus far, therefore, Stephen speaks with the consent of that nation, that the bones of the patriarchs were conveyed out of Egypt into Canaan.'—*Lightfoot, Hore Heb. et Talm.*

with much of the history to which St. Stephen is referring, which, however, would be too well known by his hearers to require any clearing up on his part. But first as to the burial of the bodies of the patriarchs in Sychem. *And our fathers died, and were carried over into Sychem.*¹ We have no account of the death of the brethren of Joseph, we have, therefore, no account of any directions as to the carrying of their bones for burial in the land which their children were to inherit. The same reason, however, which led Joseph to direct that his bones should be carried up and buried here would influence his brethren to direct that their children should do the same. Indeed, the fact that Joseph had left this injunction to his children would almost necessarily lead the descendants of the other patriarchs to be equally solicitous to remove the bones of their ancestors, even though no such command had been given. And accordingly Jewish history tells us that the bones of all the patriarchs were carried out of Egypt not, according to Josephus, at the general Exodus, but immediately after their death. He tells us, indeed, that they were buried at Hebron; other accounts, however, say that they were buried in Sychem, though this was *the inheritance of the children of Joseph*.² In the time of St. Jerome the tombs of the twelve patriarchs were still shown at Sychem, or Shechem, and were visited by pilgrims.³

Whitby.

Antiq. Book
II. c. 7, § 2.Lightfoot.
Joshua xxiv.
32.
Epist. lxxvi.

The real difficulty, or rather obscurity, occurs at this place, where we are told *that Abraham bought a possession for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem*.⁴

¹ καὶ κατέβη Ἰακώβ εἰς Αἴγυπτον, καὶ ἑτελεύτησεν, αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ πατέρες αὐτοῦ—The Vulgate rendering is, et defunctus est ipse, et patres nostri—*He himself died as did our fathers*. The optic, “And died himself, with our fathers.” The Æthiopic and Armenian versions are, “And died, he and our fathers.”

² On this Dr. Samuel Davidson grounds one of his charges against the author of the Acts of the Apostles, and says that we have here one of the many historical mistakes” made by him or by St. Stephen. His words are, “All the sons of Jacob are said to have been buried in Palestine, which does not harmonize with Genesis,” to which the only answer that can be made is that there is nothing in Genesis

against, nor yet in support of, the statement made by St. Stephen; what St. Stephen, however, alleges to have taken place, Josephus asserts did take place, and antecedent probability renders it likely that this is correct.

³ “Transivit Sichem non ut plerique errantes legunt, Sichar, quæ nunc Neapolis appellatur et ex latere montis Garizim extructam circa puteum Jacob, intravit Ecclesiam: super quo residens Dominus sitiensque et esuriens, Samaritanæ fide satiatius est . . . Atque inde divertens, vidit duodecim patriarcharum sepulchra.”—*S. Jerome, Epist. xxvii. ad Eustochoium*.

⁴ ὁ ὠνήσατο Ἀβραὰμ τιμῆς ἀργυρίου παρὰ τῶν υἱῶν Ἐμμόρ τοῦ Συχέμ.—*A filiis Hemor filii Sichem. Vulg. From the sons of Hemor, Syriac, omit-*

There are here two statements:—

(1) That Abraham bought a piece of ground, and

(2) That He bought this ground of the children of Emmor.

These statements have been sometimes hastily and irreverently spoken of as variations from the Old Testament, contradictions, and even mistakes. Setting aside any question as to the inspiration of Holy Scripture and the testimony of St. Stephen, who, however,—a learned man addressing learned men,—spoke in the presence of those best able to correct such mistakes, and to point out any contradiction, let us examine how far these statements are really at variance with the account of the life of Abraham given in the book of Genesis. But before doing so it must be noted that there can be no contradiction between the Old and New Testament on this matter, whatever other objection or difficulty there may be. We are nowhere told in Genesis that Abraham did not buy a piece of ground of the children of Emmor or Hamor. We are, indeed, told that Jacob bought a possession of the children of Hamor, not that Abraham did not; the utmost then that we can say is, that the book of Genesis is silent about any such purchase. The silence, however, of one document is not contradictory of the assertion of another document.

But more than this, it is possible, nay probable, and almost certain, from the words of the Old Testament itself, that Abraham did make such purchase of land. It is possible, since no one will be credulous enough to suppose that all the details of the long life of Abraham are recorded in the short compass devoted to his life in the book of Genesis. It is impossible that this should be the case, and if many details are necessarily passed over in silence, there is no reason why the purchase of a piece of land may not have been so passed over. But it is not only possible that Abraham did buy land, it is probable, and indeed all but certain, that he did so.¹ He settled, we are told, first at Sychem, and here *the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Unto thy seed*

ting τοῦ Συχέμ. The *Æthiopic* version reads, from “the children of Emmor, son of Sychem,” but instead of *waled*, the word used for children or sons is *dakika* = posterity in a kind of tribal or family sense. *Lachmann* at this place reads τοῦ ἐν Συχέμ. In the *Coptic*, and in the *Armenian* versions, the passage reads, “from the sons of Emmor in Sychem,” and in the *Codex Sinaiticus* the same reading occurs—

παρὰ τῶν υἱῶν
εμμωρ ἐν συχέμ.

This is also the reading of B.C. 15, 18, 66, 69. See *Griesbach*.

¹ The assertion that the cave of Machpelah was ‘the first and only property of Abraham in the Holy Land’ (see *Dean Stanley’s Lectures on the Jewish Church*, first series, p. 485), is surely a dogmatic statement not only highly improbable from the nature of the case itself, but it is also one which is incapable of proof, and is certainly an assertion which has no semblance of warrant in Holy Scripture.

will I give the land : and then builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. The altar was a memorial of the Lord's appearance, and of His promise to Abraham. Now, though we are not told that the patriarch builded this altar—commemorative of God's appearance and of His promise—on his own land, it is hardly conceivable that he did this on the land of another, or on common land which the next comer might appropriate, and use the solemn memorial as an altar for the purposes of idolatrous worship. That he should desire to obtain secure possession of the place sanctified to him by the fact that there God made a solemn covenant with him, is rendered likely from what a descendant of Abraham did under somewhat similar though not equally solemn circumstances. When the plague had ceased from Israel the spot where it stayed belonged to a Jebusite. Here David resolved to build an altar to commemorate this mercy, but before doing so he took measures to purchase it. The owner would have presented it to the king, but to this David would not consent. *Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshingfloor, that I may build an altar therein unto the Lord : thou shalt grant it me for the full price : that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes : lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for food, and the wheat for the meat offering ; I give it all. And when David said to Ornan, Nay ; but I will verily buy it for the full price : for I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. So David gave Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the Lord ; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.*

Gen. xii. 7.

1 Chron. xxi.
22—26.

That the piece of land, however obtained, continued in Abraham's possession is likely from what we read in the next chapter. We are there told that after his journey into Egypt he returned *unto the place of the altar that he had made there at the first*, and this spot became for ever after allowed to the descendants of Abraham, a *sanctuary* revered by the people, *the sanctuary of the Lord*, so that when the people of Israel were about to renew their covenant with God, Joshua selected it as the place for their assemblage. For what place so fit for Abraham's "posterity to renew covenant with their God as that where their God first made His covenant with Abraham their father?"¹ That

Gen. xiii. 4.

Josh. xxiv. 26.

Made,
Dial. p. 193.

¹ See a paper by the Rev. George Williams, 'The Bible as illustrated by

Acts vii. 5.

Gen. xxi. 25.

Gen. xxi. 33.

Our Work in
Palestine,
p. 301.

Abraham did acquire a right to land in Canaan we are expressly told, and since God *gave him none inheritance in it* he could scarcely have acquired it except by purchase. We read that *he digged a well* at Beersheba, which was afterwards *violently taken away* by the servants of Abimelech and restored to Abraham by that king. Again he dug a well before witnesses, who were to attest that the well was his, and therefore the land on which it was made must have been his. In this place also he *planted a grove*, and to dig a well and to plant a grove implies a legal right to the land thus used. This is evident in the case of the *grove* which he *planted*, since to do so is still equivalent to taking formal possession of the land on which the trees stand, and to this day a man's landed possession amongst the Bedawin is rather in the trees on the land than in the soil itself.¹ Unless, indeed, Abraham had an absolute and prior right to the land on which the trees stood and the wells were sunk, the wells could hardly have been *violently taken away* from him by the inhabitants of the country, nor is it probable that he could lawfully have planted it with trees.

Whilst, then, the absence of any direct mention of the purchase of land in Sychem affords not the slightest presumption against the assertion of St. Stephen that he did make such purchase, the probability from the incidental references to the wells and the grove is, that Abraham did make such purchase of land.

Gen. xxiii.
13.

The second assertion is, that Abraham bought the parcel of ground of *the children of Emmor the father of Sychem*. Now, since we read that Jacob *bought a parcel of a field where he had spread his tent at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father*, the first, and not altogether an unnatural, supposition is, that St. Stephen confused Abraham's purchase of the cave at Macphelah, with this purchase by Jacob in Shechem, since the interval of one hundred and twenty years does not permit of our supposing that Abraham and Jacob bought a piece of land of the same persons; but this will, I think, be found to be a hasty inference, made without due consideration of the text, and without sufficient regard to probability. The children of

modern science and travel,' read before the Church congress at Dublin, Oct. 2, 1868.

¹ "Each tree has its owner, whose rights are respected without the necessity of setting fences or walls around to protect the fruit; indeed, this would be impossible, as the property is in the tree itself, and not in the soil; and

many of the richer Bedawin own a number of palms, scattered singly or in groups throughout the plantations."—*Palmer's The Desert of the Exodus*, p. 167. The planting of trees was the exercise of a right of possession, as the cutting of a turf was the symbol of possession in other countries and in later times.

Emmor, or Hamor, does not mean those whom Hamor begat, but the descendants of Hamor, just as the children of Israel does not mean necessarily the twelve sons of Jacob only; and *father* is here apparently used, agreeably to a common orientalism, to mean the ruler, or probably the founder of a place,¹ for Shechem in this verse as in the one before is the name of a place, not of a person. That this is most likely to be the case, is seen in this:—

(1) Otherwise there is tautology, since if children of Hamor means those whom Hamor begat, then Shechem would be one of these children, and the sense of the passage would require us to read, the children of Hamor, the brethren of Shechem.

(2) It is altogether unusual among the Hebrews for the father to be distinguished by the son, but the son by the father. It is not Jesse the father of David, but David the son of Jesse; not Hachaliah the father of Nehemiah, but Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah; so that had this passage borne the meaning which we commonly assign to it, it would probably have been written Shechem, the son of Hamor, and his brethren. These difficulties have been felt by others, but—

(3) The usage of the Hebrew Bible is to speak of the founder of a town or place as the father of that place or town—of this the second and fourth chapters of the First book of Chronicles afford frequent and abundant evidence. It is, then, the more probable meaning of this passage, that Jacob bought land of the Beni Hamor, the descendants of that Hamor who founded Shechem. This is inherently probable from a consideration of the passage as it occurs in the book of Genesis.

And this probability is strengthened by the fact that so able and impartial a critic as Lachmann has decided that the genuine text of the Acts is this—*from the sons of Emmor the ruler, or lord*] *in Shechem* (παρὰ τῶν υἱῶν Ἐμμὼρ τοῦ ἐν Συχέμ), and again because this reading is that of some of the most ancient versions² of the New Testament. As Jacob thus

¹ Thus Hur, the son of Ephratah, the second wife of Caleb, is called the father of Bethlehem, אֲבִי בֵּתְלֵהֶם, and gave the name of his father to this city (1 Chron. ii. 24, and iv. 4)—Benjamin Ephratah, called also Caleb-Ephratah; and since there is no trace of any earlier name, it is most probable, regard being had to the antiquity of Bethlehem, and to this fact that it was called after Ephratah, that Hur, her son, was not merely the founder of this city, but that he was the

founder of it.

² In the *Peshito* Syriac, this verse is as follows: "And he was brought to Sichem and was laid in the sepulchre which Abraham had bought for money of the sons of Hamour." In the Arabic (*Fayyumiye*h), "And he removed to Sichem and lay in the sepulchre which Abraham had bought with money of the sons of Hemor." In the *Philoxenian* Syriac, "And they were brought to Sichem and were laid in the sepulchre which Abraham had bought for a

bought land in Shechem of the Beni Hamor, who lived in that place, so must Abraham, had he bought land, have bought it of the same tribe. The two must have been purchased from the same people, unless they had been dispossessed of their territory in the mean time. So that on critical grounds entirely it is, to say the least, as likely that St. Stephen is right as that he confounded two distinct transactions. And when we add to this the consideration of the assembly to whom these words were spoken, and the accurate knowledge displayed by the speaker, and the evidences of St. Luke's acquaintance with Jewish history and tradition, and the fact that he was writing under the eye of St. Paul the disciple of Gamaliel, this, apart from all questions of inspiration, will compel us to conclude that St. Stephen is not mistaken in what he asserts, and that Abraham bought land of the Beni Hamor, and that Jacob, revering *the Sanctuary of the Lord*, bought land also in and around this place. Some have supposed that land acquired by Abraham might have been re-entered upon at his death, either by right or otherwise, and that Jacob bought again the land thus lost for a time to his family. This may be true, though it is not necessary to the explication of this passage to suppose that this was the case. One thing is clear, and that is that our knowledge of these early times is so small that we ought not to venture upon asserting that a probable solution is necessarily the only one which can be offered, still less may we with our ignorance venture to declare that what we cannot explain is a contradiction of something else about which we are equally ignorant.¹

We know, however, that the wells which Abraham had digged—and surely on his own land—the *Philistines stopped . . . and filled with earth* after his death, and that Isaac re-acquired these, and *digged again the wells of water which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham*, and again that he *called their names after the names by which*

piece of money of the sons of Hamour, who was (or which were) of Sichem." In the *Armenian* version the reading is, "And they removed to Sichem; and were laid in the tomb which Abraham had bought with pieces of money of the sons of Emör in Sichem." In the two Coptic versions, the *Sahidic* and *Memphitic*, we read, "And they removed them to Sychem and laid them in the sepulchre which Abraham bought at a price of silver [from] the sons of Emmör in Sychem." In the *Georgian*

and *Slavonic* versions this verse is, "And they were brought to Sychem and were laid in a tomb which Abraham bought at a price of silver of the sons of Emmör, of Sychem" (i.e. son of Sychem). In the *Ethiopic*, "And they removed them to Sechem; and they buried them in the sepulchres which Abraham bought with his money of the son (or sons) of Emör son of Sechem."

¹ On the "sons of Hamor" see note B at the end of this chapter.

is father had called them. Here is a parallel instance of lands obtained by one patriarch, held by him during his lifetime, re-occupied by the inhabitants of the land after his death, and obtained again by his son; and what Isaac did, is reasonable to suppose Jacob might have done.¹

Salmeron.
Leigh.

(17) *But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,* (18) *Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.* (19) *The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.*

Gen. xv. 13.
Ex. i. 7—9, 22.
Ps. cv. 24, 25.

It was this growth of the people, the fact that they were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, which led the king in his jealous fear of the children of Israel to practise subtle means to prevent their increase, as in later times we read in oriental history similar measures devised or encouraged to keep down the numbers of a subject race. *Another king arose*, a king, that is, of a different race or dynasty to the one who had raised Joseph to power.² *He dealt subtilly*, with craft, and that without success, as when he subjected them to hard bondage, and yet did not attain his purpose by the hardness of the tasks which he imposed: or as when he gave command without effect to the midwives to destroy the newly-born children, and at length charged all his people, *Every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.*³

Exod. i. 7.

Lange.

Corn. & Lap.

Exod. i. 22.

With this charge of dealing subtilly (*κατασοφισάμενος*) compare the language of Achior: *When a famine covered the land of Canaan, they went down into Egypt, and*

¹ "St. Stephen is speaking of an Amor or Hamor who was a different person from the Emmor or Hamor with whom Jacob dealt; Hamor was the name of the prince of the Shechemites (Gen. xxxiv. 2). And it is no more surprising that there should be two princes of Shechem called Hamor, than that there should be any Candaces in succession in Meroë, and many Pharaohs in Egypt, and any Cæsars at Rome."—*Wordsworth*.

² *Another king*—A king of another race—or of a new family, a new king,

Exod. i. 8. The name does "not necessitate the idea of a change of dynasty, but favours it." Mr. R. S. Poole in *Smith's Dictionary*. "According to Sir Gardner Wilkinson (*Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 42, 2nd edit.), this 'new king' was Amosis or Ames, first of the eighteenth dynasty, or that of the Diospolitans from Thebes."—*Hackett*.

³ "*Crevit populus*—Mortuo Joseph et fratribus. *Mysticè crucifixo Christo et Apostolis passis crevit Ecclesia*."—*Gorranus*.

Judith v. 10,
11.

sojourned there, while they were nourished, and became there a great multitude, so that one could not number their nation. Therefore, the king of Egypt rose up against them, and dealt subtilly with them (κατεσοφίστατο αὐτοὺς), and brought them low with labouring in brick, and made them slaves.

Ex. ii. 2-10.
Heb. xi. 23.

(20) *In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair (ἄστειος τῷ Θεῷ),¹ and nourished up in his father's house three months: (21) And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.*

Antiq. ii. ch.
9, § 5.

According to Josephus, it was this *exceeding* beauty of Moses which touched the heart of Pharaoh's daughter when she discovered the ark with its burden by the banks of the river.² He says that Moses was divine in form, that is, *exceeding fair* (μορφῇ Θεῖος), words equivalent to those used by St. Stephen, that he was "fair in the sight of God" (ἄστειος τῷ Θεῷ).

De Sacer.

It was through this exposure, the being given over to death, that Moses was raised up to honour and power, to be a prince and deliverer of God's people. In this was Moses a type of that *prophet* like unto him, who should come after him, and should indeed redeem and deliver His people. It was by His death, not in type, but in reality, that He overcame death, and triumphed, not over the hosts of Egypt, but over the armies of the Evil One, and was raised up again from the dead, and by His resurrection brought justification to His people.³

Lange.

Pharaoh's order was to cast out every male child. Not only was this order not carried out in the case of Moses, but he was saved and nourished by the daughter of the king. What God wills to live, that no power nor device of man, however subtle, can kill.

Luke xxiv. 19.

(22) *And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. (23) And when he was full forty years old,⁴*

Ex. ii. 11, 12.

¹ On this phrase Μώσης ἦν ἄστειος τῷ Θεῷ see note C at the end of this chapter.

² "γεννηθεὶς οὖν ὁ παῖς εὐθὺς ὄψιν ἐνέφηνεν ἄσπειότεραν ἢ κατ' ἰδιώτην." —*Philo de Vita Mos.*, § 3.

³ "Moses elegans fuit typus Christi, qui fuit speciosus forma præ filiis hominum, Psalm xliv. 3, quia corpus perfec-

tissimum habuit, utpote formatum et organizatum à Spiritu Sancto, ut index esset animæ ipsius elegantissimæ et pulcherrimæ. Divinitas enim velut sol resplendebat per humanitatem Christi, eique suam pulchritudinem afflabat." —*Corn. à Lapide*.

⁴ "The martyr speaks agreeably with the whole nation: 'Moses was

it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Human wisdom, which in its source is from God, for *He is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, and which, when pure, leads to Him, is given us that we may use it in God's service, as Moses used *the wisdom of the Egyptians* in working out the purposes of God in the deliverance and afterwards in the guidance of His people. John i. 9.

That Moses, however, did not derive his laws and institutions from Egypt is evident in this, that instructed as he was by the priests of Egypt, the class to which was assigned the education of youth, yet there is in his laws no trace of the idolatry which was prevalent in that country. He was raised up to do God's work, not because he had this *wisdom*, but having been raised up, he sanctified that learning which he had received to the service of God. God needed not, indeed, this wisdom, but He put it into the heart of him who had received this gift of earthly wisdom to employ it to His glory. For neither was Saul made an Apostle because he had been brought up in the heathen schools at Tarsus, nor was Moses raised up to be the lawgiver of Israel because he had been trained *in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*. Olshausen.

He was *mighty in words and in deeds*. It is not said that he was eloquent, this we know he was not, but that he was *mighty in words*. Mighty, because of the deeds which went with his words. No one, indeed, is *mighty in words* for God, who is not also mighty in deeds, whose deeds do not accord with the words which he declares.¹ Exod. iv. 10.
Mariana.

forty years old in Pharaoh's court, and forty years in Midian, and forty years he served Israel.' 'Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai exercised merchandise forty years, was learning the law forty years, and forty years he ministered to Israel. R. Akibah was an illiterate person forty years: he sent himself to study forty years, and forty years he ministered to Israel' [Beresh. Rabba, fol. 115. 3]."
—*Lightfoot.*

These traditions of the Rabbins probably arose out of these facts in the life of Moses.

¹ Here, according to Dr. Saml. Davidson, is another of the "many

historical mistakes" in the speech of St. Stephen, or at least of the record of his speech, by the author of the Acts of the Apostles. He says, "It is stated that Moses was *mighty in words*, which is at variance with Exod. iv. 10." It is hard to see in what the variation consists. A man's deeds may be weighty, and yet not many: a man's *words* may be forcible, full of truth, of mighty import, in short *mighty*, but yet the man may not be *eloquent*, and he may be even *slow of speech and of a slow tongue*, according to the humble self-estimate of Moses; for this is what Moses means by not being *eloquent*. A man's words

Ex. ii. 11, 12. (24) *And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: (25) For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.*

Moses knew that he was to be the deliverer of Israel. His miraculous preservation in infancy, his providential education at the court of a king who had commanded that all the male children of the Israelites should be slain as soon as born, and the spirit of prophecy which was in him, were so many tokens and assurances of his Divine mission, and he thought that the people whom he was to deliver would recognize and acknowledge this, *that God by his hand would deliver them.*

Lightfoot.

St. Stephen in thus citing the rejection of Moses by *his brethren* shows that the conduct of the Jews, before whom he was speaking, in rejecting Christ was the same conduct as that which their forefathers had shown in the rejection of Moses, and that in this rejection of Christ was fulfilled the words of Moses: *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me*—like me in His being rejected as I was rejected, when I would have delivered the people of Israel, and when the people refused to see that God by my hand would deliver them from this house of bondage.

Fromond.

Gangæus.

Ex. ii. 13. (26) *And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? (27) But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?*

Luke xii. 14:
Acts iv. 7.

As the attempt at reconciling those who were at variance with each other was the cause of the persecution against Moses, so was the coming of Christ into the world to make one those who by man's sin were separated from God and from each other, the cause of His death upon the cross.¹

Gorranus.

are mighty, if the message which he deliver be mighty, not if he be fluent in speech. Compare 2 Cor. x. 10; and see on this passage, *Schleusner* in *Δυνατός*. This latter quality indeed frequently makes a man not *mighty* in words. The declaration of God to Moses is, *I will be with thy mouth and*

teach thee what thou shalt say (Exod. iv. 12). And surely with such a Spirit prompting the words of Moses, he must from that moment at least have been mighty in words as well as in deeds.

¹ "He that will reconcile peace-breakers and reprove the injurious, must expect to be accused as a peace-

Who made thee a ruler? It was the accusation of the Jews against Christ, that He, being a man, made *Himself equal with God*, the ruler of the world. Their cry was but the echo of this cry against Moses: *By what authority dost thou do these things, and who gave thee this authority.* So constantly do we find this throughout the history of the people of Israel, that they were ever ready to wrong and ill-treat the benefactors whom God had raised up and had sent to deliver them.

John v. 18.

Matt. xxi. 23.

Chrysostom.

(28) *Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?* (29) *Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian,¹ where he begat two sons.*

Ex. ii. 15, 22
iv. 20;
xviii. 3, 4.

He was raised up and sent to be the redeemer and deliverer of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and yet because of his brethren's obstinacy and blindness he *fled* from the land, and from among the people whom he would have delivered. And this wrath of man postponed for a while the purpose of the Almighty. In this was the rejection of Moses a type of that after-rejection of Christ, which should exclude them as a nation from being the messengers of God to the Gentile world, and should keep them in bondage to that harder task-master to whom they had bowed down their backs.²

Lange.

(30) *And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.*

Ex. iii. 2.

St. Stephen lingers over this history of Moses, the great

breaker, and injurious and arrogant himself."—*Baxter*.

¹ "Midian, or the country inhabited by the Midianites or Ishmaelites, were two districts of Arabia Petrea, one lying along the eastern branch of the Red Sea, or the Elanitic Gulf (the Gulf of Eyleh), and extending to the country of Moab, on the east and south-east, and the other situate near the wilderness of Sinai. The inhabitants of both these districts probably sprang from the same stock, and were descendants of Midian, son of Keturah, who were intermingled with the children of Ish-

mael, and often included under the name of Ishmaelites."—See *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*.

² "Quonquam Deus suos cruci subjiceat, non tamen sine consolatione sunt: imò bona quæ largitur et donat, multò plura et præstantiora sunt quàm quæ patimur mala. Non igitur habes occasionem murmurandi. Si bona suscepimus, mala autem cur non sustineamus? Allegoricè Christus etiam fugiens à Judæis invenit uxorem, Ecclesiam scilicet de Gentibus."—*Ferus*.

prophet and lawgiver of the people of God, and that as it seems for these reasons :—

(1) Lest in speaking of the abrogation of the Mosaic law, he should seem to his accusers to disparage the lawgiver of Israel.

(2) In thus drawing a picture of the ingratitude of the people towards Moses, and their rejection of him notwithstanding his claims to their regard, St. Stephen would remind them of their like ingratitude to Christ, and their contempt and rejection of Him who came to be their true deliverer.

(3) That he might prepare them to accept the claims of that prophet like unto Moses, who had also been foretold by Moses, but whom they had despised and rejected as they had before despised and rejected him who was the type of The Great Prophet.

Estius.

Moses and David, who were both to lead and rule the people of God, were shepherds, and were in some sort prepared for their work of governing the people by their life amid the sheep-folds.¹ The life itself was typical of the office to which they were afterwards to be called, as they themselves in this life were the types of Christ, who delighted to be known as the Shepherd of His people. *The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing*, are the words of the Psalmist. *I am the good Shepherd* is the declaration of Christ Himself, whom St. Paul speaks of as *that great Shepherd of the sheep*, and St. Peter sets before us as *the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls*. And Moses the shepherd was not sent upon his mission of leading the people of Israel out of bondage without preparation for the work. *Forty years of instruction in all the learning of the Egyptians, and forty years of retreat in the solitude of the wilderness of Mount Sinai*,² prepared him for his *forty years of labour in leading the people from Egypt through the desert into the promised land*. Thus did God act in the preparation of him who was to be the leader and instructor of His people, the figure of His Church. All things are measured and ordained, and there is no sign of haste in the actions of God towards His Church, whether it be this one in the desert, or that which was gathered out of all nations by the preaching of the Apostles of Christ.

Lorinus.

Ps. xxiii. 1.

John x. 14.

Heb. xiii. 20.

1 Pet. ii. 25.

Quesnel.

¹ "Omnium artium aliarum pastoritia simplicissima est, minimeque operosa ita ut meditationi, contemplationique naturalium ac divinarum rerum otium relinquat et tractari etiam à peregrinantibus potest. Suppeditat

victum nobis vestitumque, et Deo sacrificiorum, oblationumque materiam."—*Lorinus*.

² "Dum sic quietus expectat in tempore illi Dominus apparet."—*Calvin*.

There have from early days been two opinions as to the *angel* which appeared to Moses in the *flame of fire in a bush*, and in numbers and weight of names, the fathers of the church, as well as later commentators, are equally divided.

(1) Some regard the *Angel* as the Messiah Himself, the *great Angel of the covenant*.¹

(2) Others understand that God was indeed speaking in the midst of the fire, but that He was speaking by the mouth of a created angel or messenger, whether by Michael, His Angel as he is specially called, or by one other of the heavenly host, for He *maketh His ministers a flame of fire*.

It is not easy to determine this question. One thing we know, it was God's voice and God's manifestation, whether spoken and made by means of an angel or not. God was there indeed, even though surrounded by His angels; so that *in the bush God spake unto Moses*, and He *that dwelt in the bush* dwelt there in glory, and sent a blessing upon His people by the hand of Moses, whom He commissioned to deliver His people from the oppression of Egypt.²

This manifestation of the presence of God to Moses was at Mount Horeb in the desert of Mount Sinai. Mount Horeb is the name of the ridge from which Mount Sinai rises, or, as some understand, a peak lower than that of Sinai, but rising from the same base.³

Chrysostom.
Ecumenius.
Ambrose de
Fide, l. c. 5.
Whitby.
Alford.
Isaiah ix. 6, in
LXX.
Augustine.
Baxter.
Lange.
Heb. i. 7.

Mark xii. 26.
Deut. xxxiii.
66.

Whitby.

Exod. iii. 1.
Lienard.
Robinson.

¹ "ἄγγελος—Here, as continually in the Old Testament, the angel bears the authority and presence of God Himself: which angel, since God giveth of His glory to another, must have been the great Angel of the Covenant, מַלְאָכִי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם of Isa. lxiii. 9, 'the Angel of the Lord.'

His presence—the Son of God.'"
Alford. This interpretation has been sanctioned by the voice of the Church so far as expressed in one of the Antiphons at Advent:—"O Adonai, et Duximus Israel, qui Moysi in igne flammæ tibi apparuisti et ei in Sina legem disti; veni ad redimendum nos in archio extento. Judith xvi.; 1 Paral. ii.; Act. vii.; Exod. vi.; 4 Reg. ii."—*Breviar., die xv. Decemb.*

² See S. Gregory in Mag. Moral. Preface, § 3 (Oxford transl. p. 15). Full in Defensio Fid. Nicæ, Pt. 1, c. 1, 10, etc.

³ The name of Horeb is not now known by the Arab tribes who wander along its base, and this renders it difficult to determine the extent of mountain

tract which was once known by this name. It is believed, however, that the large ridge to the north of Sinai, from the base of which the latter peak towers, was that which formerly bore the name of Horeb—the ground of the dried-up ground or desert. Mr Palmer thinks that the name belonged to the whole desert or waste at the foot of Sinai, and that the name was afterwards limited to the mountain. At the base of Sinai stretches a large plain, the largest indeed in the Sinaitic peninsula, and here the children of Israel are believed to have made their encampment whilst the law was being delivered to Moses. A ravine which runs out of the plain still bears the name of the Wadi Shoeib, or vale of Jethro, or Hobab, the priest of Midian, and tradition says it was formerly his pasture-ground. Sinai, or 'the Mountain of the thorn,' so called from the bush of Seneh, or wild Acacia, in which the Lord appeared to Moses, stood at the edge of this wilderness of vegetation

God made Himself known to Moses by a *flame of fire*. It may be that this was done:—

Deut. iv. 24.
Heb. xii. 29.

(1) That they might remember that He is a *consuming fire*, and that they might fear Him accordingly.

Gorranus.

(2) That they should not be able to make any resemblance of this manifestation so as to worship it.¹

Exod. iii. 2.

There was also a significancy in this, that the fire was seen in a bush. This was at once a sign, in that the bush though interpenetrated with the fire, was not *burned with fire*, and it was also a type:—

Theodoret.
Sanchez.

(1) Of the house of Israel, rough in their disobedience as a thorny bush of the desert, and lowly in their state of subjection, and yet, though cruelly persecuted, and enduring great and continued suffering at the hand of the Egyptians, not destroyed, because God was with and around them. *Burned in the fires of the kiln, and yet not consumed.*²

Isaiah liii. 2.

(2) Of the Messiah in the lowliness of the Humanity which He had assumed, and which was without *comeliness*. *that we should desire Him.* A thorn bush in the desert of this world, interpenetrated with Divine fire, through the inseparable union of the Divine nature with the human.³

Athanasius.

(3) Of the Christian Church, of which Christ is the Head, and the history of which was typified by the events of Christ's life. In the lowliness of its rise, unnoted by the world, as His birth was unnoted by the mighty of the world, and exposed its whole history through to continu-

and gave its name to this tract, the desert (Exod. xix. 2), or 'wilderness of Sinai,' and a small eminence opposite the face of Sinai is still called Aaron's hill, and is believed to be the spot where he stood to witness the worship offered by the children of Israel to the calf which he had made (Acts vii. 30). Hither Elijah wandered when pursued by Ahab, and here, in the 'still small voice,' the Lord spake to him (1 Kings xix. 8—14). On the controversy on the situation of Sinai, see *Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*; *Robinson's Biblical Researches*; *Ritter's Geography of Palestine*; and *Palmer's Desert of the Exodus*.

¹ "Consultò Deus in rubo, quæ arbustum est potius quàm arbor, Deus apparuit, ut inquit Isidorus; ne fortè Judæi ad idolatriam propensi, idolum ex arbusto possent conficere."—*Salmeron*.

² "Rubus erat populus Dei humilis quidem et spinosa planta: ignis Ægyptia

tyrannis et crudelitas, quæ affligere quidem non tamen consumebat iurebat. Erat autem spinosus rubus sua illa tenuitate, quia ab illo pungeretur atque lacerandi erant Ægyptii. Rubus autem in Sinai nobilitatus igne et Dei conspectu; sic Israël nobilitatus atque purgatus igne tribulationis. Ita pene Philo [lib. i. de vita Moysis] et idem ferme Theodoretus, q. 6. in Exod."—*Sanchez*.

³ "Allegoriam affert Cæcumenius significaretur captivitatis humanæ redemptio per Incarnationem futuram. Nihil igni comparatur Deus [Deut. iv. 24] homo herbis ac spinis: homini Deus summo miraculo conjunctus est; Humanitas per Divinitatem non consumpta, sed incorrupta post Resurrectionem reddita est. Chrysostomus hunc locum idem etiam habet de corpore Christi, quod mortuum quidem est, et a morte nequaquàm perpetuò detinere potuit."—*Lorinus*.

trials; like Him in His life on earth, and yet endowed by Him, and because He is with it, with indestructible life, so that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*¹

Lange.
Matt. xvi. 18.

Moses thought not to find God in that rough and dreary solitude, yet there did God appear to him. God is nigh at hand, and is found by those who love Him in every place and under every circumstance. Joseph found Him in the prison, for there *God was with Him*; Moses found Him in the desert; Jonah found Him in the sea, and was delivered by Him. Those who know Him not think that He is where all things are prosperous, though there they find Him not. To the saint, however, He is present to console, and purify, and strengthen amid crosses and afflictions. When Moses was in the king's court, and surrounded by the pomp of Egypt, we read not that God *appeared to him*, though He did so in the solitude of *the wilderness of Mount Sinai*. If we also would find God and hear His voice speaking to us, let us withdraw from the cares and anxieties of the world, and listen to Him in solitude, and we shall know of His presence.²

Acts vii. 9.

Ferus.

(31) *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, (32) Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.*

Matt. xxii. 32.
Heb. xi. 16

He wondered that, contrary to the nature of things, the bush was not consumed with the fire. Then *the voice of the word*, before spoken of as an Angel, spake, saying, I am He who is always present, *the God of thy fathers*. In thus reminding them of the words of God to Moses, Stephen repels the charge that he had spoken against Moses, whom he acknowledges to be the son of Abraham, of Isaac, and of

¹ "Quia Ecclesia Dei nunquam ab afflictionibus prorsus immunis et libera est in mundo, hic perpetua ejus conditio modammodo depicta est. Quid enim aliud sumus quam flammæ pabulum? Innumeræ vero Satanae faces assidue solitant, quæ ignem subiciant et corripant et animis, sed Dominus mira et singulari gratia nos a consumptione indicat ac tuetur. Ardere ergo incendium necesse est, quod in hac vita solet uratur. Sed quia Dominus in medio nostri habitat, efficiet ne quid afflictiones nobis noceant, quemadmodum etiam

Psalmo xli. 6, dicitur."—Calvin.

² "Mysticè. Ignis rubum incomburens est Spiritus Sanctus, peccata illius populi non consumens, quia densas nequitiae spinas Dei beneficiis, opposuit, vel ecclesia persecutione flammata non perit et Christus in ea loquitur."—Gorranus. In the Æthiopic liturgies and hymns of Jared the bush burned with fire but not consumed is taken, *passim*, as the type of the Blessed Virgin. Many of the Fathers so explain this symbol. See *Æthiopic Liturgies and Prayers*, by Rev. J. M. Rodwell (1864).

Gorranus.

Jacob. These three are honoured in this way, as though God were in a special degree their God—

Sylveira.

(1) Because when all around had fallen away to idolatry and had forgotten Him, they preserved alive the worship of the one true God.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

(2) Because to these three were all those promises made which God was now fulfilling in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, and by giving to them the possession of the land of Canaan.¹

Calvin.

Then Moses trembled and durst not behold. This trembling, this reverential fear, was the preparation of the heart to hear and to obey the message of God.²

Ex. iii. 5.
Josh. v. 15.

(33) *Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.*

Sionnet.

In token of reverence for the place where God manifested His presence, the priest who served in the worship in the temple at Jerusalem performed the duties of their office with naked feet. Perhaps the Mahommedan practice of taking off the shoes on entering into their places of worship takes its rise from this. This, however, is not clear, since it is their practice to cover their feet with shoes provided for this purpose so as not to defile the floor with dirt from the streets. The practice, then, is not the same, though it may in its origin have been the same. Symbolically the naked foot was the sign of subjection. Thus, as a token of the coming subjection of Egypt and Ethiopia to the king of Assyria, Isaiah was commanded to *put off his shoe from his foot*, and accordingly the prophet *walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign*. On the other hand, shoes on the feet are a sign of joy, or at least of the absence of sorrow: thus to Ezekiel it is said, *make no mourning for the dead . . . put on thy shoes upon thy feet*; and the direction of the father in his joy at the return of the prodigal is, *Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet*.³

Isaiah xx. 2,
3, 4.

Ezek. xxix. 17.

Luke xv. 22.

¹ "In his tribus maximè resplenderunt virtutes, in Abrahamo fides et obedientia; in Isaac animi puritas cum contemplatione; in Jacob laborum tolerantia cum patientia et constantia." —Sylveira.

"Dieu de la foi dans Abraham père des croyans; Dieu de l'esperance dans Isaac, figure de la Resurrection; Dieu de la charité dans Jacob, modèle de

l'amour paternel et fécond en bénédictions." —Quesnel.

² "Sanctorum timor nil aliud est quam reverentia quædam spectabilis, imò timor filialis. Impii autem omnino non timent Deum juxta illud: *Non est timor Dei ante oculos eorum* [Ps. xiv. 7], aut serviliter timent, non offensam sed tantum pœnam." —Ferus.

³ "Miphiboseth occurrit Regi David

The place where thou standest is holy ground :—

(1) It is holy because in a peculiar manner God was present there, or at least made there His presence more manifest. God sanctifies the place where He is present. Lorinus.

(2) Because of the holy law which was then announced and given to Moses.

In this command to Moses we have an exhortation which should be remembered by God's people at all times. Let them lay aside worldly cares and anxiety and the stain of earthly defilement when going into the presence of God to worship Him, and remembering that the place where He is is holy, cast off unholy affections and worldly desires. But Gangaüs.
 In the place, the very ground where God is, is thus holy, Lange.
 that respect is due to the body which He inhabits, that temple and shrine made without hands, which is sanctified by its being one with that body which Incarnate God took to Himself when He came down to the earth. If Moses, when, was bidden to put off his shoes when he came to the ground where God was manifested, let us tear ourselves away from the lusts and passions of earth, lest with them we defile the very sanctuary where God dwells, the temple of our body.¹ Quesnel.

(34) *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their roaring, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.* Ex. iii. 7.

I have seen, I have seen—rather, seeing I have seen. This, though not unknown in classical writings, is yet more common in Hebrew, and is regarded as a Hebraism.² *The affliction of my people.* They were His, though rebellious

lotis pedibus, quasi conscius peccati se ipsum servum fateretur. In adoratione autem et sacrificiis nudari pedes iam inter externos docet Giraldu dum explicat illud Pythagoræ symbolum *nudis pedibus sacrificandum*. Quod mirabile est Pythagoram à Judæis impsisse sicut alia plurima. Certè sequens esse apud Hebræos nudis pedibus supplices ad Deum accedere, probant a sacra, quæ vocantur nudipedalia; et exercuisse Paulum, ut Judæos ludificaret, tradit Hieron. in c. iv. epi. t. Galat., et indicat Juvenal, Satyr. 6, ubi ita de Judæis—

Observant ubi mero pede Sabbata reges;

Et vetus indulget senibus clementia porcis.'"—*Sanchez*.

¹ "In Israel vigeat hic mos, ut qui juri, rebusque suis renuntiabat, solveret calceamenta: jurè id Moses præstare jubetur; ut disceremus superioris et præsulis esse rerum suarum oblivisci, propriis commodis renunciare ut aliorum salutem curet."—*Novarinus*.

² "Illa repetitio *videns vidi* significat magnum et peculiarem affectum et Deus cui omnia sunt præsentia, dicitur videre oculo pietatis et clementiæ, ut notat D. Basilius Seleucus orat. 26."

—*Sylveira*.

Dent. x. 18.

children; though they had rejected Moses and would sin against God in the wilderness. The prodigal is not less a son though a prodigal. He loveth *the stranger* even whilst he is a stranger, and cares for, and provides for, and guides those who yet reject His love. And *I have heard their groaning*—He does not say I have heard their prayer, but their groanings. As it was the wants and sufferings of men which drew our Lord to them, and not their call, so does He see our *afflictions* and hear our *groanings* even before we pray. Indeed, when we pray from the sense of our need,¹ He makes us first feel our need, and then moves us to pray. He is never ignorant of the sufferings of His people. He sees at all times; but the season when most He stretches forth His hand to deliver is when sorrow is at the greatest, and the afflicted are driven to feel that there is no other deliverer.

Baxter.

And am come to deliver. God is said to *come down* when in a new and unexpected way He demonstrates His power, as now He was about to do in the deliverance of His *people* from the house of bondage. When these words are used it is almost always about some great thing, some great deliverance, or some signal punishment which is at hand. Thus God is said to *go down* when in the land of Shinar He founded the speech of the presumptuous builders of Babel. When, again, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was *great* and *very grievous*, and He was about to overthrow the cities of the plain with a signal destruction, then again we read, *I will go down now*; that is, I will greatly punish them. So when He was about to give the Law on Mount Sinai for the guidance of the world, then again we read, *The Lord will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai*, as in this place because of the *affliction* of His *people*, and because He was about to deliver them, He says, *I am come down*.

Gen. xl. 7.

Gen. xviii. 21.

Exod. xix. 11.
Ferus.
Corn. à Lap.

We are taught here that the greater our need the nearer is God to aid us:—

(1) He sees all the suffering, all the *affliction* of His people.

(2) He hears the sighs, the *groaning*, of those who are His.²

(3) He comes to aid His people at the fitting season, which He and He alone knows.

Lange.

¹ "*Videns.* Deus totus visus est, totus auditus. Omnia videt, omnia audit, sed videre et audire dicitur quando miseretur."—*Gorranus*.

² "*Afflictio dat vires orationi, ejusque oratio maximè evolat ad Deum ut*

observat D. Gregor. relatus in glossa, etsi cito non exauditur, ex eo est, ut meritum crescat et augeatur, ut notat idem D. Gregor., Lib. 2, Moral. cap. 24."—*Sylveira*.

(35) *This¹ Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.*

Ex. xiv. 19.
Num. xx. 16.

The inference which St. Stephen leaves his hearers to draw from these words is this, It does not follow that God rejects those whom you have rejected. Your fathers rejected *this Moses*. God, however, sent by His angel, and supported *by the hand of His angel*, the same man to rule and deliver the Israelites whom they rejected, as He has appointed the Just One, whom their children crucified, to be the Ruler of His Church and the Redeemer of His people.

Alford.

Baxter.

They accused him of making himself *a ruler and a judge*. God sent him to be more than this, *a ruler and a deliverer* (ἀντρωτής),² or redeemer, a type of Him who should redeem His people from the bondage to Satan by the shedding of His blood upon the cross. Moses, then, is a redeemer or deliverer from temporal bondage, the captivity in Egypt, a mediator, too, in His office of praying for the people, and a bearing to them the messages from God. This he is without impeachment of the prerogatives of Christ, who delivers not from temporal bondage, who redeems not by the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb on the door-posts of their houses, but by His blood purifying their hearts, and cleansing them from an evil conscience. Christ also was the Mediator and Redeemer by His own inherent power. Moses, like other human instruments of God, is only relatively and analogically so, and does so *by the hand of the angel*, with the power given him by the Angel, with the protection thrown around him by the Angel, and under the guidance of the Angel, who was the real leader of the people.³

Estius.

De Dieu.

Estius.

Beausobre.

¹ "It must strike every reader that the four verses (35—38) all begin with the demonstrative pronoun, whilst also the second half of verse 35 begins with οὗτον, whereas in verse 38 the relative is repeated in a similar manner. The rhetorical emphasis unmistakably lies in this repeated and forcible pointing to the person of Moses, and indeed the intention of this emphasis is especially to be sought in the contrast which the Divine call and commission of Moses forms to the denial and rejection which he experienced from his people." — Lange.

² "This word does not occur again in the New Testament, but is used by the LXX. to mean, as it does here, 'a deliverer,' without any reference to a ransom, λύτρον." — Humphrey.

"In the case of Moses the epithet ἀντρωτής naturally bears only an external reference to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but this is to be conceived as a prefiguration of the redemption from sin, which was accomplished by the Messiah." — Olshausen.

³ "Jesus Christ rejeté par les Juifs durant sa vie a été établi par sa resurrection dans une souveraine puissance."

Ex. vii. viii.
ix. x. xi.
xiv. 21, 27,
28, 29; xvi.
1, 35.

(36) *He brought them out, after that He had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.*

Stier.

God's mercy was not limited to the people of Israel. He shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the presence of the people of the land. He sent, indeed, deliverance to His own people, but He manifested His great power, and showed Himself the true God to the Egyptians, so that His wonders were a call to them, and a sign of His will. It is not, then, only—for this is St. Stephen's argument—in Judæa that God's love and power moving the hearts of men are manifested. He did so of old in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the desert. So does He show His wonders now to us when in Egypt, in the world, in the midst of our sins and surrounded by temptations. Thus does He manifest the power of His sacrament in that baptism for the remission of sins, of which the Red Sea is the type. Thus in the desert does He feed us and lead us as a Shepherd.

Ferus.

Deut. xvii. 15,
16.
Matt. xvii. 5.
Acts iii. 22.

(37) *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.*

Amelote.

St. Stephen here vindicates himself, by implication, from the charge of disparaging Moses, by recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, since in doing so he did but bow to Moses, who had foretold of the coming of this prophet, in which words the Jews were wont to see a prediction of the advent of the Messiah.

The Prophet who should come was to be *like* Moses. In this no equality one way or another is implied, but only likeness. He was to be like—

Gorranus.*

(1) He was to have a body, to come in the flesh, visibly.

Tirinus.

(2) He was to be a *deliverer*, or redeemer, *like* him whom the people of old had rejected. His likeness was also manifested in this, that as Moses was rejected when he would deliver God's people from Egypt, so was Christ

pour être le chef et le libérateur de son Eglise. C'est ainsi que Dieu a accoutumé de préparer par l'humiliation et par les rebuts ceux dont il se veut servir pour ses œuvres."—*Quesnel*.

¹ "*Tantum me*, carne visibilem, sed super me, majestate mirabilem, sed

super me majestate terribilem. Ne nova, inquit, et adventitia Christi dicatur esse doctrina, ipse Moses, qui noluerunt obedire patres vestri, prædicat et in hominis hunc forma futurum, et cunctis animabus vitæ præcepta daturum."—*Bede*.

jected when He would have delivered them from that prince—Satan—who was typified by Pharaoh.

(3) He was to be a lawgiver. As Moses was a lawgiver to the children of Abraham after the flesh, so was Christ to be the promulgator of a new law to the whole Israel of God. In both cases did these lawgivers give a new law, which, however, was but the republication of that which was from the first.

Lienard.

(38) *This is he, that was in the church¹ in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sina, and with our fathers : who received the lively oracles to give unto us :*

Ex. xix. 3,
17 ; xxi. 1.
Deut. v. 27,
31 ; xxxiii.
4.
John i. 17.
Rom. iii. 2.
Gal. iii. 19.
Heb. ii. 2.

It was God's Church which was in the wilderness, His people which were gathered there before they came into the land of Canaan. Here is still the same argument, the same fact insisted on—God's mercy. God's manifestations of power were not confined to the land of Judæa and to the temple in Jerusalem.

Wordsworth.

The Angel who delivered God's will in Mount Sinai spake to Moses, and the same Angel spake to our fathers by the mouth of Moses, as well as by the thunderings heard from the Mount. He was thus the mediator, the means through which God spake to the people, the fathers of the nation of the Jews. For the people said unto Moses, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but let not God speak unto us, lest we die.* He it was who received from the Angel the lively oracles of God to give unto the people.² The Angel of God, whether Michael or some other messenger and minister of God, spake the words of God to Moses. This does not exclude the Divine presence. He does not tell us that the Divine presence and the Divine will was made known to Moses by means of an angel. The same Angel it was which was with him in the Church, and gave power to those who guided and ruled that Church.

Exod. xx. 19.

Whitby.

Sanchez.

And what Moses received, that he might give unto the people, was the lively oracles of God—*oracles* and commandments which contain in them the germ of life, which

¹ "ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ in cœtu, sc. Israelico; nam totus ille populus a Mose traditur. Krausio articulus τῇ indifferens videtur, Stephanus certam quantitatem populi concionem in animo habuisse, scilicet concionem ad audiendam legem convocatam, quia de legislatione Exod. xix.) sermo sit."—Rosenmüller.

² "λόγια ζῶντα. Sunt oracula viva, i.e. quæ Moses viva voce ἀμείτως accepit. Simili phrasi μαντεία ζῶντα dixit Sophocl. Œd. Tyr. vers. 489, ubi schol. μαντεύματα ζῶντα καὶ ισχύοντα τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. Vide Rom. iii. 2."—Alberti.

rightly observed conduce to temporal life and well-being, and to the preservation of the spiritual life. They are words of life, indeed, if observed in the inner teaching; but words of death, or dead words—

Lienard. (1) Of death if only regarded in the *oldness of the letter*.

Rom. vii. 6. (2) And *dead*, since they threatened death, and declared the punishment which awaited upon sin.

Lienard. And these *oracles* of God are words of life, are *living oracles*—

(1) Because they are oracles proceeding from the fountain of life, the living God.

Whitby. (2) Because in keeping the oracles or commands of God is the promise of life.

Sa. (3) Because they die not, they were given to be observed even after the death of the lawgiver, and to be for ever observed by God's people;¹ since they are not temporal, but *spiritual*.

Rom. vii. 14. (4) Holy Scriptures are oracles of life, *lively oracles*, since in obeying them the life of grace is maintained now, and the life of glory will be given hereafter, for *man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live*.

Dion. Carth. God's law as given to His people of old was a *fiery law*, kindling the hearts of those who observed His law with the fire of His love; and a law of endless life to those who walked according to its precepts.

Deut. viii. 3.
Deut. xxxiii. 2. (39) *To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,* (40) *Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

Ex. xxxii. 1. As St. Stephen is leading up his argument until it is to end in Christ, and His final rejection by the people, so he here shows that the people had throughout their long history always rejected the laws and the ministers of God, and preferred Egypt, or the world, to His service.

Blonnet. *In their hearts turned back again into Egypt.* Though

¹ "It is observable which St. Stephen saith, *he received the lively oracles given unto them*; the Decalogue he received from the hand of God, *written with the finger of God*; the rest of the Divine patefactions he wrote himself, and so delivered them not a

mortal word to die with him, but *living oracles*, to be in force when he was dead, and oblige the people to a belief when his rod had ceased to broach the rocks and divide the seas."—*Pearson on the Creed*, art. 1 (fol. 6, p. 15, edit. Ox. 1843).

ere the charge against the Israelites is more with reference to their wishes, and to their inclination for the idol worship of the land where they had so long dwelt, than to any actual attempt to return unto Egypt,¹ yet we know that the desire to return was shown at one time, perhaps more frequently in a proposal actually to return unto Egypt. When they wanted *flesh to eat*, they remembered *the fish of which they had plenty, and which they eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the peeks, and the onions, and the garlick.* Then they said one to another, *Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.* The accusation, however, of St. Stephen in this place is that in *their hearts they turned back again into Egypt;* that they clung to the idol service and to the abominations of the Egyptian worship. Hence, indeed, their cry, *Make us gods to go before us.* A twofold sin. They who should have obeyed one God, the God of their fathers, then asked for gods, and they bid Aaron *make them gods*, though God who had led them with mighty wonders out of Egypt was the God and Maker of all things.

*Make us gods.*² The folly of idolatry is shown in this. The gods whom they were ready to worship must first be made by the hands of man. According to the taunt of the prophet: *He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak: . . he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied. . . And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.*

This Moses. In the original and fuller account the language of the people is still more contemptuous: *As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.* But this contemptuous language is not only directed against Moses, it extends also

¹ "Novum sibi numen creat quisque non spiritualiter Deum colit."—*Justin.*

² *θεοί*—"Quidam in questionem idcirco, cur plurali numero hæc enuntiantur, quum tamen Aaron ab Israelitis rogatus, non complurium deorum, sed unius vituli effigiem conflaverit, et que adorandum proposuerit" (*Patritius*). "The plural is best explained as that of the *pluralis excellentiæ*, since Aaron made but one image in

compliance with this demand of the people (called *θεοί*, אֱלֹהִים in Ex. xxxii. 8.), and since the Hebrews would naturally enough transfer the name of the true God to the object of their idolatrous worship" (*Hackett*). "Verum, ea res nihil habet questionis; Israelitæ namque neque vituli neque unius dumtaxat numinis effigiem petiere, sed *deos* quoscunque, unum aut plures, quos itineris duces haberent."—*Patritius.*

Alford.

Num. xi. 5.

Num. xiv. 4.

Ezek. xx. 7.

Gorranus.

Markland.

Isaiah xlii.
14, 16, 17.

Ex. xxxii. 1.

to God Himself. They seem to deny or to forget that God had led them out of Egypt, and that He, and not a man, not Moses, had opened a way for them by dividing the waters of the Red Sea, so that they were able to pass through on dry land.

Lorinus.

Aaron, we know, yielded to the importunity of the people, and made for them *the similitude of an ox*. The fall of Aaron under the Old Testament dispensation, and of St. Peter under the New Dispensation, both of whom were called to prominent positions in God's Church, seems to have been permitted to teach them, and those who should succeed them, the knowledge of their own weakness, and the duty of having compassion on those who in like manner should fall into sin.

Corn. & Lap.

Deut. ix. 16.
Ps. cvi. 19.
Deut. iv. 19;
xvii. 3.
2 Kings xvii.
16; xxi. 3.
Ps. lxxxi. 12.
Jer. xix. 13.
Ezek. xx. 25,
39.
Amos v. 25,
26.
Rom. i. 24.
2 Thess. ii. 11.

(41) *And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.* (42) *Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years¹ in the wilderness?*

Whitby.

Neh. ix. 18.

They made a calf, the symbol of one of the gods of Egypt: and yet this was not worshipped by the people as such, but as the image of the God which had delivered them from Egyptian bondage.² The grossness of the idolatry is shown in this, it was *made* by them: it was the outward form of an Egyptian idol, yet worshipped as their deliverer. *They made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt.* And they rejoiced in the works of their own hands, by dancing and feasting, by sitting down

¹ Here, again, we have an instance of the use of a round sum instead of the exact period. The time of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness is "indeed but eight and thirty years and a half; for so saith God Himself, Numb. xiv. 34."—*Lightfoot*.

Note, also, the language used by St. Paul, "about the time of forty years." Acts xiii. 18.

² "Apparently in imitation of Apis, the bull worshipped at Memphis, as a living symbol of Osiris. Herod. iii. 28; Diod. Sic. i. 21; Strabo, xvii. 805.

(Winer, Realw. 'Kalb.') The *ox* was a common symbolic form of idols in the East; and the most recent discoveries at Nineveh have brought to light colossal bulls. Sir Gardner Wilkinson (second series, ii. 97, Winer) thinks the golden calves of Israel to have been in imitation of Mnevis, a bull kept at Heliopolis (Diod. Sic. i. 21; Strabo, xvii. 80), as a living symbol of the sun. Jeroboam afterwards set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan, and with the same proclamation. See 1 Kings xii. 28."—*Alford*.

to eat and to drink and rising up to play in honour of this idol which they had made. Ex. xxxii. 6.

Only God may rejoice in the works of His *own hands*. Ours are imperfect at the best, and stained with sin, with unworthy motives, and with selfish ends. Our rejoicing must be in the glory of His works, not in our own. This latter rejoicing is idolatry, the former is worship.¹ Bengel.

Then God turned from them, and gave them up to their own idolatries. This was the punishment for their sin, and implies more than the merely letting them alone in their sin. It is a judicial delivering up by way of punishment for their wickedness. Thus does God deal with men when they turn from Him. He hinders their purposes of evil, but if they still persist in their determination to sin, and continue to reject Him, and to resist His mercy, then finally He gives them up to their own will to follow their own evil imaginations. In the words of the prophet, *Ephraim is inclined to idols: let him alone.* The Israelites began with the beast worship of Egypt, they went on to the star worship of Assyria—or Sabaism, a word supposed to be derived from the Hebrew word for host—they were given up to *worship the host of heaven.* Alford.

As it is written in the book of the prophets. The citation is from the book of Amos, and as in the Hebrew Scriptures the whole of the writings of the prophets make one book or division, a quotation from any of the prophets is thus spoken of.² But it is here asked, Is it correct to say that the children of Israel did not for forty years—during the whole time of their wandering—offer to God *slain beasts and sacrifices*?³ This is not said, nor is this the force of St. Stephen's question, nor of the words of Amos, which he cites. (1) They did offer sacrifices such as God had prescribed, but they offered them intermingled with those which they De Saci.
Hos. iv. 17.
Cook.

¹ "Deo convenit lætari in operibus manuum suarum et nobis in operibus manuum Ejus. Idololatræ sunt homines qui lætantur in operibus manuum suarum."—Bengel.

² καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν βιβλίῳ τῶν προφητῶν. "Locutionis hæc est ratio, quod olim non omnes libri sacri in uno lumine compacti essent, sed in diversis membranis descripti et comprehensi, atque hoc sensu aliquando libri sacri, libri Prophetarum et Hagiographorum, qui sunt libri majores, aliquid autem particularium et minorum librorum mentio fieri solet. Et Surenhusius.

quando apostolus dixit, scriptum esse in libro Prophetarum, ad duo potissimum prophetarum loca respexit, quorum unus extat apud Amosum, cap. v. 25, 26, 27, atque alter apud Jeremiam, cap. xix. 13 [quere xx. 5], cui alia loca parallela addi possunt, veteres namque Hebræorum Theologi duo et plura sacræ Scripturæ loca de eadem materia tractantia in unum contrahere solebant compendii gratia."—Surenhusius, *Conciliationes*, p. 412.

³ "Σφάγια, victimæ, sunt animantia, θυσίαι, alius generis oblationes, ferta."—Rosenmüller.

See in Levit.
viii. ix.
Num. vii.

offered to the calf, or to Moloch, and God will not accept such offerings. He demands the whole heart and the exclusive worship of His creatures.

Novarinus,
Lightfoot.

(2) They offered at best from fear, not from love and from a free heart, but they who so offer, offer no true sacrifice to God. The words of God, spoken with regard to a later apostasy, are applicable here: *When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seven years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves?*

Zech. vii. 5, 6.

(43) *Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.*¹

Rosenmüller.

It was the custom of large masses of people when emigrating from their native seats in quest of new lands to bear with them—either before the host or in the midst—the images of their gods. Here St. Stephen charges the fathers of the Jewish people with bearing, not any token of the God who delivered them from Egypt, but *the tabernacle of Moloch*:—small shrines which contained the image of Moloch or Baal²—in order that they might in secret wor-

De Dieu.

¹ Καὶ μετοικίω ὑμᾶς ἐπέκεινα Βαβυλῶνος. The Heb. of Amos v. 27 is מִן־בָּבֶל מִן־בָּבֶל מִן־בָּבֶל מִן־בָּבֶל. And I will carry you away beyond Damascus. Hence the LXX. καὶ μετοικίω ὑμᾶς ἐπέκεινα Δαμασκοῦ. In this passage in the Acts the *Vulgate* is “trans Babylonem,” which is an accurate rendering of מִן־בָּבֶל, “far away from” (Fuerst), and the meaning assigned to ἐπέκεινα by Hesychius, who says, ἐπέκεινα παρὰ ἐκείνῳ ἔξωτόν. In Isaiah xviii. 1, מִן־בָּבֶל, “on the other side,” “beyond,” is rendered ἐπέκεινα by the LXX. The terms of the original prophecy of Amos would therefore be fully expressed by ἐπέκεινα Βαβυλῶνος, Babylon being “far away from” and “beyond” Damascus. The Arabic of Acts vii. 47 is “to a distance from Babel,” following the LXX. as regards the word Babel, but misapplying ἐπέκεινα. In the Coptic versions, both of Wilkins and of Boetticher, we

have “to the parts about Babylon, apparently also misunderstanding ἐπέκεινα. The text, however, of Amos v. 27 in Tattam’s Coptic version of the Minor prophets reads “trans Damascum,” whilst the Æthiopic version has “woosta Babilon, into Babylon.

² ἀνελάβετε τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ Μολοχ—the Septuagint rendering of Amos v. 26, in Hebrew מִן־בָּבֶל מִן־בָּבֶל מִן־בָּבֶל מִן־בָּבֶל. —In using this word “סכנה” of which Winer in his Lexicon says—“*tugurium, tabernaculum*—fortasse cista sacra quæ Dei simulacrum concludebant, quales *Diod. Sic. xx. 25, σκηνὴν ἱερὰν ἀπέπελλат*,” Amos seems to be employing the precise technical word in use among the worshippers of Moloch. In the cuneiform of the cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar (Col. viii. 37, vol. 1 of A. S. Inscriptions, *Brit. Mus.*), we read—“[סכנה] la enûm—of Merodach”—a

worship this idol. The worship of Moloch, Baal, or Saturn, or these are but different names of one false god, was, according to Rabbinical tradition, widely diffused throughout Canaan, and entered largely into the religious rites of the Carthaginians, so that the Israelites probably carried with them into Egypt the worship of this Phœnician deity,¹ and in addition to this form of idolatry learnt in Egypt to worship the Coptic god Remphan. That the children of Israel were addicted to the worship of Moloch is evident from the rigid terms in which it is denounced and prohibited in the Old Testament. *Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Moloch, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God. Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Moloch, he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.* This command was openly transgressed by Phaz, who made his son to pass through the fire according to the abominations of the heathen and by Manasseh. It was one of the good deeds of Josiah that he defiled the high place. . . that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch. This idolatrous worship seems to have been deeply engrained in the heart of the people of Israel, and their sin in this respect is frequently referred to in the books of the Old Testament.

I will carry you away beyond Babylon. The denunciation of the prophet Amos to the children of Israel because of their worship of Moloch and *Chiun*, or Remphan,² is, therefore, *Will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus*; and this was fulfilled when the king of Assyria carried away the ten tribes of Israel beyond Damascus. The Jews, however,—the people of Judæa,—were carried away even further than this, and were led into captivity beyond the Euphrates into Babylon and remained there; and St. Stephen, either using

Olshausen.

Lev. xviii. 21.

Lev. xx. 2.

2 Kings xvi.

3.

2 Kings xxi.

6.

2 Kings xxiii.

10.

Alford.

Amos v. 26,

27.

an interesting instance of the verbal accuracy of Amos in the first place, and also the rendering of the LXX. adopted in St. Luke. In the same inscription, l. ii. line 9, we have another illustration of his verse. Nebuchadnezzar there represented saying, "Merodach placed or put into my heart—*ana sada zirdisu*—to bear his tabernacle." *Sada* is the Heb. שָׂדָה inf. of שָׂדָה to bear, and *zirdi* the Chaldee כִּרְדִּין curtains or tapestries. Compare with this 1 Chron. xvii. 1, *The ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under*

curtains.

¹ See as to Moloch Note D at the end of this chapter.

² "Remphan, or as it is in the LXX. Rephan, is a Coptic name, and was used by the LXX. (being themselves Egyptian Jews) to translate *Chiun*, which is found in the Hebrew text of Amos v. 26, and which is the Arabic name for the same god."—*Humphrey*.

"This god, which was the same as Chronos in the Greek mythology, was worshipped under the form of a star."—*Anelote*.

Josephus, Antiq. v. 2, § 3; xi. 3, § 10. these words of Amos, applies them, as is the wont throughout the New Testament, and among the Rabbinical writers, to those to whom he is speaking, who, because of their sins were not only carried away beyond Damascus, but further than this, even *beyond Babylon*,¹ that is, makes a citation as in so many other instances, not so much of the precise words, as of the precise sense of the denunciation; ² or else in accordance to a common practice of the Rabbins, of which we have many other instances in the Scriptures, he here quotes from another part of the book of the prophets in which for their sins the house of Judah is threatened with being carried away *beyond Babylon*.³ It is to be noted that St. Stephen's citation is not said to be from Amos, but from *the book of the Prophets*.

Sanchez.

Surrenhusius.

Jer. xx. 4, 5.

Ex. xxv. 40;

xxvi. 30.

Heb. viii. 5.

(44) *Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.*

The tabernacle in which the ark of the covenant was kept was called *the tabernacle of witness*, or the tabernacle of meetings,⁴ for various reasons:—

¹ "Illa verba Amosi referuntur vel ad sortem Israelitarum, si animum obfirmaverint tristiores futuram quam vel Judæi a Syris experti sint, vel quæ ipsos Syros manebat. Nam Judæi abducti quidem videntur, sed non nisi ad fines patriæ, in Syriam vide 2 Reg. x. 32, 33. At Israelitis plus ultra migrandum erat. Porro et Syri, Rezine rege eorum trucidato et regno ejus jam tunc everso, ante Israelem in Assyriam abducti, Kiram 2 Reg. xvi. 9. Cujus urbis aut si mavis Regionis, situs a variis varie ostenditur. Israelitæ ergo itidem patria ejicienda erant, ultra *Babyloniam*, imo ultra quam Syri, nec ut Syri in unam: sed in plures regiones. Ita Josephus, Israelitas *ultra Euphratem* migrasse, scripsit vid. *Antiq.* xi. 4, infra 65 annos post hanc Amosi denunciationem et in Syris et in Israelitis adimpletum."—*J. J. Hottinger de incolis Samariæ præcis*, § 15.

² "Hoc in omnibus scripturis sanctis observandum est, apostolos et apostolicos viros in ponendis testimoniis

de veteri testamento, non verba considerare sed sensum: nec eadem sermonum calcare vestigia, dummodo assentientiis non recedant."—*Jerome in Amos. v. 27.*

³ "Καὶ σὲ καὶ πάντα Ἰουδαὺν δώσω εἰς χεῖρας βασιλέως Βαβυλῶνος, καὶ μετοικιοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς Βαβυλῶνα καὶ κατακόψουσιν αὐτοὺς ἐν μαχαίρᾳ. Καὶ δώσω πᾶσαν τὴν ἰσχύν τῆς πόλεως ταύτης καὶ πάντας τοὺς πόνοὺς αὐτῆς καὶ σύμπασαν τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῆς καὶ πάντας τοὺς θησαυροὺς τοῦ βασιλέως Ἰουδα δώσω εἰς χεῖρας ἐχθρῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ διαρπῶνται αὐτοὺς καὶ λήψονται αὐτοὺς, καὶ ἄξουσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς Βαβυλῶνα."—*Jer. xx. 4, 5. LXX.* Tischendorf omits καὶ διαρπῶνται αὐτοὺς. These words are absent from all the texts which he quotes.

⁴ "Nunc respondet Stephanus ad id quod objiciebatur, quod Jesus esset demoliturus locum illum. Non hoc expresse affirmavit Stephanus: sed si dixisset, nihil deceret quoniam in deserto sit habitum tabernaculum tes-

(1) Because of the ark contained within it enclosing the tables of the law, which were a perpetual *witness* between God and the people. A witness against them if they disobeyed Him and brake His commandments, a witness for them if they observed and kept His law: a standing evidence that they were entitled to the promises which He had made to them. Hammond.

(2) Because when Moses or the high priest afterwards could know the will of God, and went into the tabernacle, they there obtained an answer in their perplexity, and thus received perpetual *witness* of His truth who revealed Himself in the tabernacle: a *witness* that all who desired an answer to their prayer should seek God in His tabernacle, and a pledge that there they should receive His guidance. Lienard. Exod. xlix. 42; xxx. 36. Num. xvii. 4, 7.

(3) The *tabernacle* was in itself, as it stood before the eyes of the people, a *witness* to all His mercies whose tabernacle it was, a witness that He had delivered His people and had commanded them to worship God, and reverence His name in the way that *He had appointed*. Baur. Cook. *He*. St. Stephen does not name the name of God. This is one of the many cases in which he and others do not name God except by one of His attributes. The worship in the wilderness, as at Jerusalem, was to be as *He* who spoke by Moses *had appointed*, when He gave to him the direction that he should make the tabernacle, and all things according to the fashion that he had seen in the mount. Sharpe. The worship of earth which is acceptable in the sight of God is that which is after the pattern of the everlasting worship in heaven. Quesnel.

(45) *Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David: (46) Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle of testimony for the God of Jacob.* Josh. iii. 14. Neh. ix. 24. Ps. xlii. 2; lxxviii. 55. Acts xiii. 19. 1 Sam. xvi. 1. 2 Sam. vii. 1. 1 Kings viii. 17. 1 Chron. xxii. 7. Ps. lxxxix. 19; cxxxvi. 4, 5. Acts xiii. 12.

Which also our fathers. St. Stephen dwells continually

on it. Deinde etsi sit ædificatum templum per Solomonem, illud tamen haberi à Chaldæis permittendo, satis minus ostendit sibi templum cordi esse. Et testimonium Esaiæ probat, in cor nostrum in habitare et non manufactis templis" [Is. xxix.]—Hieron.

"Σκηνωμα, in distinction from

σκηνή, is a sure and permanent dwelling-place; according to the context, is meant a dwelling-place worthy of the God of Jacob, a worthy sanctuary."—Lange. "A standing temple"—Hammond. Hesychius says, σκηνωμα, οἶκημα, οἶκος, τόπος, and Suidas has σκήνος, σκηνωμα. σκηνωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ ναὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.

upon his descent from Abraham. He is a son of Israel. The patriarchs are his *fathers*. The hopes they had possessed, and this expectation to which he clung, he would that his brethren after the flesh should also be partakers of. Joshua he speaks of by his Greek name, and thus, intentionally or no, recalls the fact that he who led the children of Israel into Canaan was a type of the Captain and Deliverer who went before His people in the spiritual possession, the Canaan which is not on earth but in heaven.

Wordsworth.

The tabernacle, which had been made according to the fashion showed unto Moses, the children of Israel brought in with Jesus, or Joshua, at the taking possession of the lands formerly held by the Gentile tribes of Canaan. These lands were themselves a standing witness to the truth of God, since they had been promised aforetime to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, when as yet they were strangers in Canaan.

Alford.

Unto the days of David. This passage may have either these two meanings:—

(1) It may refer to the tabernacle *which*, he says, *our fathers brought in*, and bore with them in their wandering until the days of David, when a settled place—the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite—was bought by David, and the tabernacle was no longer removed from place to place or—

Rosenmüller.

(2) It may refer to the Gentiles *whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David*, when Jerusalem was taken, and the last remains of the people of the land were subdued. The latter seems most in accordance with the construction of the sentence, the former more agreeable to the context, which is about *the tabernacle* and its history until replaced by the temple of Solomon.

Lienard.

David designed, he *desired*, and asked permission to build a permanent tabernacle—the temple—and for this purpose he bought the threshing-floor, when the plague was stayed. His long wars, however, prevented this design from being carried out, and it was his son whom God permitted to build His temple.

2 Sam. vii. 2.

2 Sam. xxiv.

10.

1 Chron. xxi.

15, 28, 29.

Tirinus.

God is here spoken of as *the God of Jacob*, as elsewhere it is prophesied of Christ that *He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever*. Though He is the God of the whole earth yet is He spoken of as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and

¹ “ἕως τῶν ἡμερῶν Δαβὶδ—*Usque ad ætatem Davidis*, mansit nempe tabernaculum illud portatile, et ex una urbe in aliam transferebatur.” Rosenmüller.

f Jacob, because of the promise made to them and to their seed, especially in respect of the Messiah. In this place, however, He seems to be spoken of as the God, not of Abraham, as in the Psalms, but as *the God of Jacob*, because his patriarch was in a more peculiar manner the father of the Jewish nation. Had St. Stephen spoken of God as the God of Abraham, then Ishmael alike with Isaac would seem to have been a child of the promise: had He spoken of Him as the God of Isaac, as in the book of Genesis, this would have been to include Esau as well as Jacob within the covenant, but *the God of Jacob* is a name which could comprehend only the house of Israel as the children of God, and hence it was no doubt a favourite appellation of God amongst the people of that nation.

Psalm xlv. 10.

Gen. xlv. 1.

Lorinus.

(47) *But Solomon built Him an house.* (48) *Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,*

1 Kings vi. 1;
viii. 20, 27;
1 Chron. xvii.
12.
2 Chron. ii. 6;
iii. 1; vi.
18.
Acts xvii. 24.

The Jews considered David to be their greatest king, and regarded Solomon as inferior to him, and yet it was not the father, who was permitted to build a house for the worship of God, though he *desired* to do so, but the son. In this way is the first in man's estimation made last, and the last is placed first. David, as a man of war, whose hands had been stained with the blood of the enemies of his people, was forbidden to erect a temple to the God of peace, though his desire to do so made him acceptable in the sight of God, so that his offering was regarded.

Chrysostom.

In these two facts, that Solomon was permitted by God to erect a temple to His honour, and yet that *the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*,¹ we are taught—

(1) That visible things, the material house of prayer, are not to be despised, and that the very desire to build such is regarded with *favour* by God.

(2) That the visible is but an image of the invisible things of God, and that these are therefore not to be forgotten by those who would be regarded as the true worshippers of God, who delights only in those who *worship Him in spirit and in truth*.

Lange.
John iv. 24.

(49) *Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool:*² *what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord:*

Is. lxvi. 1, 2.
Matt. v. 34.
35; xxiii.
22.

¹ "Dicit Stephanus—Deus propriè non habitat in templo, ut vos putatis; sed formaliter habitat in seipso suaque divinitate, immensitate; participativé vero et effectivé per operationem hab-

itat in toto mundo, præsertim verò in mentibus fidelibus et sanctis."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

² "Spiritualiter cælum sanctos, terra vero peccatores insinuat, quia his vide-

or what is the place of My rest? (50) Hath not My hand made all these things?

Lienard.

The temple of God at Jerusalem was, therefore, His home, not because, as the Jews thought, He dwelt there, but because God was worshipped there; for wherever He is truly worshipped there His presence will be revealed. It was that though David found *favour* with God because of his desire to build Him a house, and Solomon, as a token of the same favour of God, was permitted to do that which his father had but *desired*, yet is God not limited to any space of earth, but filleth the heaven where He is throned, and the earth which is but His footstool.

Ex. xxxii. 9;
xxxiii. 3.
Lev. xxvi. 41.
Deut. x. 18.
Is. xlviii. 4.
Jer. iv. 4; vi.
10; ix. 26.
Ezek. xlv. 9.
2 Chr. xxxvi.
16.
Matt. xxi. 35;
xxiii. 34, 37.
1 Thess. ii. 15.
Acts iii. 14.

(51) *Ye stiffnecked¹ and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. (52) Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the slayers and murderers:*

Luke xxiv.
27.

Some commentators have thought that the change which here takes place in the speech of St. Stephen arose from some interruption on the part of members of the Sanhedrin, or from the murmurs of others of the hearers, and that his appeal here assumes a personal character from this circumstance.² It may be so, though it is not necessary to imagine any such interruption. The speaker in the course of a close connected view of the past obstinacy and blindness of the people as shown in the treatment of Joseph and of Moses and of their rebellion against God, and of His mercies, seemed to have been inflamed at the thought of the repeated rejection of the ministers of God, and turning to the persecutors and murder of the Messiah, the prophet of whom *Moses and all the prophets* did speak, he bursts out in this passionate condemnation of the nation for its consistent resistance to God—*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears. Ye stiffnecked*, who now, as in time past, refuse to be

licet Deus inhabitando præsideat, illos condemnando prosternit.”—*Bede*.

¹ “Σκληροτράχηλος is to be found nowhere else in the New Testament; in the translations of the Old Testament it occurs pretty frequently for the Hebrew עִצְזָרָה. Compare Exod. xxxiii. 3, 5. It expresses the stub-

bornness and obstinacy which stand so prominently in the natural character of the Israelites.”—*Olshausen*.

² “Quæ nunc sequuntur, Stephanus dixisse videtur, postquam clamor plebis interpellatus fuerat; hæc enim cum precedentibus parum cohærent.”—*Rosenmüller*.

our necks to God's yoke, but continue to walk in the way of your fathers and follow the promptings of your own evil hearts; *ye whose hearts and ears, whose affections and understandings, are alienated from God notwithstanding all His past blessings, do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did.* He says *uncircumcised in heart*, not *uncircumcised* merely in lips, for with their lips they did draw nigh to Him to whose rule their *hearts* were not subject, and to whom they did not lend their *ears*—did not obey.

In using this indignant expostulation at their continued resistance to the messengers whom God had sent to show them of the coming of the Just One, St. Stephen recalls the words of God Himself unto Moses, *Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people*; and to all their past sin they had now added this fresh sin, that they were *the betrayers and murderers of Christ the Just One*: He who alone is Just, the absolutely Just.

(53) *Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*

In this passage, as in so many other parts of his speech, St. Stephen, addressing those who were learned in all the learning of the Rabbins, uses the account and tradition which the Rabbins had preserved, for as the books of the Pentateuch make no direct mention of the idolatrous form of worship with which he reproaches them, so is it silent as to the ministry of angels at the giving of the law.¹ St. Paul, however, trained probably under the same master as St. Stephen, or at least instructed in the same species of learning, and bearing in mind this speech, which seems to have sunk so deeply in his heart and to have been cherished in his memory, tells us of the law that *it was ordained by angels*, and speaks of it in another epistle as *the word spoken by angels*.

By the disposition of angels—by the administration of angels who, ministering to God at all times, were present at the giving of the law, and were the means of communicating it to Moses. We are, then, taught by these words—

(1) That the law was given to Moses by the ministry of the angels of God.

¹ "S. Stephanus legem veterem eat angelorum, non Mosis. Primò, ostendat quanti eam faciat et refellat calumniam Judæorum, qui eum quasi contemptorem et hostem legis Mosaicæ cusabant. Secundò ut arguat Judæum ingratitude et inobedientiam,

qui legem angelicam, utpote à Deo per angelos datam, non custodierint; nec Christum in lege adumbratum et prædictum receperint. Blasphemiam ergo legis contemptæ, quam adversarii ipsi objecerant, in ipsosmet retorquet."—*Corn. à Lapede.*

Ferus.

Cook.

Ecumenius.

Ex. xxxiii. 5.

Ex. xx. 1.
Gal. iii. 10.
Heb. ii. 2.

Olshausen.

Gal. iii. 19.
Heb. ii. 2.

Whitby.

(2) That the angels in their orders—*disposition* (Corn. & Lap. *διατάξεις*)—were employed in this work.

How in these words does St. Stephen condemn Christians who observe not the commandments of Christ. For if the Jews were sinful in not obeying the law given by means of angels, how much more guilty are Christians who despise the law given to man by Incarnate God.

Acts v. 33. (54) *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

His accusers could not convict Stephen of the blasphemy with which they had charged him, and yet they had determined upon his death, and thus they showed their rage at being unable lawfully to convict him,—*they gnashed on him with their teeth.*¹

They were cut to the heart, or literally they were sawn asunder (*διεπρίοντο ταῖς καρδίαις*), and they showed the agony and rage which filled their hearts by this *gnashing on him with their teeth*. The reproof which should have convinced and humbled them, and made them desist from the accusation of St. Stephen, only enraged them the more, and they turned with the greater fury against the reprover whose reasonings they could not refute.

Acts vi. 5. (55) *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.*

[Epistle for S. Stephen's Day, 55—60²]

In the sixth chapter we are told that those who were to be chosen to assist the Apostles in the care of the Christians

¹ “*Stridebant dentibus* : Etiam in inferno, *stridor dentium*, futurus dicitur. Quidni et isti dentibus strideant? cum illi, qui invidiæ morbo laborant, gehenna sibi sint.”—*Novarinus*.

² “Non seulement l’Église célèbre la fête de S. Estienne le lendemain de celle de la naissance de notre Seigneur; mais il paroît par les homilies des Pères qu’elle le faisait dès le IV et le V siècle. . . . Nous ne voyons rien de plus certain pour l’année de sa mort que pour le jour. Usuard dit que ce fut en l’année mesme de l’Ascension. Les Actes ne nous déterminent point en cela. Néanmoins il semble que les

nouveaux chronologistes s’accordent avec Usuard, comme Baronius, le Père Labbe, Genebrard. Usurier met au la mort de S. Estienne à la fin l’année où I. C. est mort. Calvisius fait la mesme chose. Le P. Petit mesme, qui met la conversion de S. Paul deux ans après l’Ascension, met néanmoins la mort de S. Estienne la mesme année que celle de I. C. Ce est tout-à-fait conforme à Eusèbe, qui parle de l’élection des sept diacres aussi-tot après celle de S. Matthias, ajoute que S. Estienne fut martyrisé aussi-tot qu’il fut élu.”—*Tillemont*.

converts were to be men *full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom*; Acts vi. 3.
 and especially that Stephen was *a man full of faith and power, and of the Holy Ghost*. Those gifts of the Holy Acts vi. 5, 8.
 Spirit, with which he was endued, were such as fitted him for his sacred calling. The gifts which he is here said to have possessed in the fulness of the Spirit enabled him to bear witness to Christ that he was the prophet promised of old in the words of Moses,*and gave him boldness in the face of the Sanhedrim and of the angry multitude. The presence of the Spirit within him did more than this, it wrought in him that peace and patience amid suffering, that confidence in danger and at the hour of death, that unshaken belief in Christ as God, and that loving and forgiving temper, which were conspicuous in the moment of his trial and martyrdom; the spirit to speak boldly and to endure all things for the faith. From this fulness of the possession of the Holy Ghost he derived not only spiritual strength, but also the clear insight into the mystery of the union of God and man in the person of Christ, which was given to him for his consolation when suffering from the fury of his enemies.¹

He looked up steadfastly into heaven, seeking there that comfort and strength which he needed; gazing with the eyes of the body, as well as with those of the mind, upon that country which he longed to enter. From thence he derived help; and was strengthened against present suffering when he beheld the glory streaming from those heavens to which he was about to be admitted. At the sight of that *glory* of the unseen God² he was able to disregard the things of earth with which he was surrounded. Accusers and judges, and the raging multitude thirsting for his blood, faded from his sight, and he saw only *the glory of God, and Jesus in His human form standing at the right hand of God*. Stanhope.
 Dion. Carth.
 Gloss Ordin.
 Corn. & Lap.
 Dion. Carth.
 Tiritinus.
 Heinrich.

In this significant action Stephen followed the example of his Divine Master, who, when He prayed, or was about to do some mighty work, was wont to look up *into heaven*—thus teaching us to look to the same place for support amid troubles; for aid when surrounded by dangers; and for strength to overcome the temptations of the evil one. Lorinus.

¹ "Hæc plenitudo fortassis modo significat novum quendam Spiritus sancti impulsum, quo adversus effera-
 ram rabiem adversariorum instructus est. Glossa interlinear. declarat 'ple-
 um fuisse, vel ut solebat esse, vel
 maxime illa hora superabundasse gra-
 am.' 'Quoniam,' inquit Lyranus, 'ea
 plenitudo prior fuit augmentata in
 martyro, quod nempe imminabat,' qui

est actus charitatis perfectæ."—Lori-
 nus.

² "Θεὸν ἰδεῖν ἀδύνατον διό εἶπε
 δόξαν θεοῦ ταυτὴν τὴν δόξαν
 καλεῖ θεὸν καταχρηστικῶς διό ση-
 μειωτικὸν ὅτι οἱ λεγόμενοι ἰωρακεῖναι
 θεὸν, δόξαν ἰώρονιν θείαν ἢ ἐν πυρὶ,
 ἢ ἐν στύλῃ νεφέλης, ἢ ἐν σαπφειροει-
 δεῖ ὁράμῃται ἢ ἠλεκτροειδεῖ."—Am-
 monius.

And saw the glory of God. The Shechinah which of old was seen in the temple of God, the bright glory by which the majesty of God was represented, and somewhat of that celestial splendour which surrounded the Messiah Himself at His transfiguration on the mount. This it would seem from the words of the narrative, was that glory which was reflected on the face of St. Stephen to the wonder of the beholders, and which was also revealed to his outward eye.¹ Added to this, however, his mental eye had a revelation of the presence and of the glory of the Eternal, and also an assurance and foretaste of the happiness which was in store for him when the sufferings of this life were ended.

How the ineffable glory and splendour, which is spoken of as the seat of God, were made visible to the eye of this dying saint, we know not; how far, like a similar vision of God's majesty granted to St. Paul, it was wholly in the body or without the body, we cannot say. It is enough for us to know from the words of Holy Scripture that such a vision of consolation was given to St. Stephen, and that he did see *the glory of God, and Jesus standing in the midst of the right hand of God the Father*, surrounded with such a glory and encircled by such majesty that He appeared, as He is, equal to the Father.

This glimpse of future glory St. Stephen saw. Thus does God deal with those on whom He lays the Cross, and who endure what He places on their shoulders. Thus does He give them spiritual consolations and strength to bear what He sends, taking not away indeed from them those sufferings by which they are *made perfect*, but giving them with the sufferings the compensation of His presence. In the case of His dying servants, God is wont to manifest peculiar favour and to grant to them an insight into that glory which cannot fully be revealed to mortal eyes, a foretaste of that joy which in its fulness will be their reward in the world to come.

Before this glory was made visible, St. Stephen is said to have *looked up steadfastly into heaven*. As the man with the withered hand was bidden to stretch it forth before the gift of healing was conferred, so the glory and the consolation which this servant of God needed in the midst of his sufferings were only afforded to him when he had lifted up his

¹ "Quò magis supplicium sibi imminere vident martyres, eò magis à Deo confirmantur, et eò liberius spem suam profitentur."—*Piscator*.

² "Plenus est Spiritu Sancto, et sic intendit in cælum, quia qui Spiritu

divinitatis afflantur, conculcatis terrestribus, cœlestibus inhiant et æternis. Qui animum elevat ad divina, temporalia contemnens fastidit et solus cœlestia querit."—*Sylveira*.

res to the seat of glory, and when he was reaching forward to the place from whence his help came.¹

(56) *And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened,*
and the Son of man standing on the right hand of
God.

Ezek. i. 1.
 Dan. vii. 13.
 Matt. iii. 16.
 Acts x. 11.

Whether by the eye of faith, by the mental vision only, or by that of sight also, he saw the opening heavens and his Saviour there, and had power given to him to see the things within the veil, we are not told. The heavens indeed were truly said to be *opened* when Christ, who has ascended to the heavens, is seen by man with the eye of faith. This appearance of the Saviour was seen by St. Stephen alone, since it was for his consolation and as a reward for his patience and endurance under suffering² that it was granted; just as afterwards, when Saul was arrested on his way to Damascus, and a voice from heaven spake to him, those who journeyed with him seem not to have seen the light which evidenced the presence of Christ to the eye of the future Apostle.³

Our Blessed Lord is elsewhere spoken of as sitting at the right hand of the Father. In His appearance to Stephen He is seen standing, as one who is there present actively to aid His servant and to plead his cause. *Standing* as his Father, and exhorting him to suffer with constancy, and to remember in whose footsteps he was treading, *Standing to receive the spirit* of the servant whom He was about to take to Himself.⁴

Gregory.
Ps. xxxv. 2.
Leigh.
Sylveira.

The Son of man. He who is not only God, but also
ally man. The dying saint saw His Lord in His human
rm as very man. St. Stephen calls Him by that name by
hich doubtless he had heard Christ calling Himself, but

1 "Then looking upwards, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

"*The Two Voices.*"—Tennyson.

2 "Et tu, mi Christiane ad imitationem Stephani, suscipe, quæ patientiis reservatur cœlitum beatam æternitatem; eò spira, ubi abundanter est, aliquid uspiam est, aut esse potest elutatum; nec ambigas quin in omnibus occurrentibus adversitatibus futurus patientissimus." — *Paciuchellius de patientia*, lib. ii. cap. 10.

quasi per ostium quoddam apertum, radiabat in mundum inferiorem. Cum enim illa claritas inter cœlum empyreum lateat et ibi quasi concludatur, quando inde emicat, videtur cœlum aperiri, sicut etiam in magno fulgure et coruscationibus cœlum aperiri dicimus.”—*Fromond.*

¹ "Sedere judicantis et imperantis
est, stare vero pugnantis vel adjuvantis.

3 "Claritas corporis Christi gloriosi

Gloss.

which is never used in the Gospel except when Christ is Himself speaking. Nor is this name elsewhere used in the Acts of the Apostles. The very circumstances of St. Stephen's trial, however, give significance to the use of this name. It was *the Son of man* who had been set at nought by the Jews, and who had proved the reality of his manhood by His death on the cross. It was this *Son of man* who, after His rejection by His own people, and His death and burial, had risen from the tomb and ascended into heaven: who, as St. Stephen declared, was not only very man, but also very God. It was this *Son of man*, our Lord in His human nature, whom St. Stephen now beheld. It was this truth, that the Son of God was also the Son of man, which the Jews found it so hard to receive. Had he spoken of the Son of God, this had been, under the circumstances, an ambiguous name. The whole argument of St. Stephen is, that He who is now at the right hand of the Father, is *the Son of man*, whom the nation of the Jews before whose tribunal he was pleading, could therefore slay and whom they had indeed slain and hanged on a tree.

Tirinus.

This name implies these truths—

(1) He was *the Son of man*, because, having taken man's flesh of His mother Mary, He was really man, Incarnate God.

(2) This name expresses the object of His incarnation: it was for the sake of man that He humbled Himself and came into the world. As he who follows peace is called *the Son of peace*, and he who consoles is spoken of as *the Son of consolation*.

Augustine.
Cajetan.
Luke x. 6.
Acts iv. 36.

Let us note the testimony which St. Stephen affords to the Divinity of Christ. He sees Him at the right hand of God. He makes confession of this truth. He is about to die, and is willing to die in attestation of Christ's Divinity, and at this moment he turns for strength and consolation to none other save Christ. By all his actions he acknowledges Christ for his God. He asserts in effect—

Royard.

(1) I see Jesus whom I desire, and who is about to receive me, so that I fear not death—nay, I am willing to die, that I may again be with Him whom so lately ye crucified.

(2) It is not against me that your rage is directed, but against Him whose presence I am conscious of,—He who

Stephanus stantem vidit quem adiutorem habuit.”—*S. Gregory Mag.*

“Lumina cordis habens celos conspexit apertos,
Ne lateat quid Christus agat: pro martyre surgit.
Quem tunc stare videt, confessio nostra sedentem,
Cum soleat celebrare magis. Caro juncta Tonanti
In Stephano favet ipsa sibi: Dux præcius armat
Quos ad dona vocat.”—*Arator.*

after His crucifixion and death has ascended up into the heavens, and now shares in the glory of the Eternal Father. Corn. à Lap.

In the midst of all his sufferings the first martyr to the faith in Christ saw clearly the prize which is laid up for him who endures unto the end; the crown that awaits him who, despising earth and earthly pleasures, fixes his eyes upon Christ his exemplar, and walks in his footsteps.¹ This, Hugo de S. Charo. indeed, is a happiness not confined to one or to another of the great saints of Christ. To every true Christian who walks by that faith which St. Stephen had, does God reveal His presence, and make him conscious of his nearness.² Every such an one sees the glory of God, and tastes, even in this life, of the comfort of His promises, even though the unbeliever be as blind to God's glory, and as unconscious of His presence, as the multitude which raged around the person of the first martyr. Ferus.

(57) *Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*

They cried out with a loud voice in order to drown the blasphemy which he uttered, that the crucified one, the *Son of man*, was the Messiah; they *stopped their ears*, that they might not hear his words: a clear acknowledgment that they understood him to assert the Divinity of the *Son of man*, which in their opinion was blasphemy. So indignant were his accusers that they refuse any longer to listen to his speech; they *ran upon him with one accord*, not waiting for any formal sentence to be passed upon him by the court, but in their zeal anticipating his condemnation, they dragged him to his death. Dion. Carth. Beausobre. Whitby. Corn. à Lap.

Thus is it with the sinner at all times. He stifles the cries of conscience by the noise and tumult of new pleasures, and by the clamour of passion deafens his ears to the pleadings of the innocent. Ferus.

¹ In the various office books of the Church the Antiphons and Proses refer to the significant name of its proto-martyr, Stephanus, a crown. Thus in the Parisian Breviary—

O qui tuo, dux martyrum
Præfers coronam nomine,
Non de caducibus floribus
Tibi coronam nectimus.

and in the Liege Breviary this Antiphon is given, "Coronasti eum, Domine, gloria et honore, et constituisti

eum super opera manuum tuarum: Posuisti super caput ejus coronam de lapide pretioso."

² "Dicitur Canticorum viii. 6, *Fortis est ut mors dilectio; dura sicut Infernus æmulatio: lampades ejus, lampades ignis, atque flammæ. Ecce charitas in proximos habet lampades flammæ, quæ sunt tanquam lucernæ ardentissimæ, quæ illuminant ad omnia excelsa ac divina penetranda.*"—*Sylveira.*

Lev. xxiv. 16.
Deut. xlii. 9,
10; xvii. 7.
1 Kings xxi.
13.
Luke iv. 29.
Acts viii. 1;
xxii. 20, 43.
Heb. xlii. 12.
Heinrich.

(58) *And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: ¹ and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

Lev. xxiv. 14.

It was not lawful to pollute the holy city with blood, and according to the ancient law respecting blasphemy, of which St. Stephen was accused, he was led outside the walls of the city to be put to death: *Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.*

Acts vi. 11.

According to the same law, the witnesses against the accused were commanded to throw the first stone.² These then who, we are told, had been *suborned* to bear false witness against him were the first to execute the wishes, if not the sentence, of the Sanhedrim. His crime was that he acknowledged Christ to be God—that, as these men asserted, he had *gone and served other gods*; and in accordance with the law the witnesses were required to attest the truth of their testimony by putting him to death. *The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people.*

Deut. xvii. 7.

The witnesses in preparing to execute their office stripped off their outer garments—

(1) In order that they might hurl the stones without impediment.

Hugo de S.
Churo.

(2) In order that their clothes might not be polluted by the blood of the blasphemer.

Acts xxii. 20.

And they laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul, who thus took part with them, and was, as he himself says, consenting unto his death. The term *young man* (*νεανίας*) has given rise to many conjectures as to

¹ “*Ἐλθοβόλουν*. They intended or prepared to stone him. The first *ἐλθοβόλουν* implieth the *intention*; for the witnesses were not yet stripped and ready for their business: the second, *v. 59*, the execution of that intent. So John x. 32, when the Jews *gathered stones* to throw at Jesus, He asked them, For which of these works *λιθάζετε με*, do you intend to stone Me? Luke i. 59, *ἐκάλουν αὐτὸ*, they intended to call it: for it follows, *v. 60*, *it shall actually be called*. If it be taken otherwise, there will be an unnecessary repetition of the same thing in *vv. 58, 59*.”—*Bowyer's Conject. on New Testament*.

² “The manner in which this pun-

ishment was inflicted is thus described by the Jewish rabbis:—The scaffold, or place of stoning, to which the criminal was to be led with his hands bound, was to be twice the size of a man, ‘and ten cubits high.’ One of the witnesses was then to smite him with a stone upon the breast, so as to throw him down. If he were not killed, the second witness was to throw another stone at him. And then, if he were yet alive, all the people were to stone him until he was dead. The body was then to be suspended till sunset.”—*Gloag on the Acts of the Apostles*. See also *Lightfoot's Horæ Heb. et Talmud* in loco, and *Godwyn's Moses and Aaron*, Book v., chap. 7.

the age of Saul at this time. The only thing that can be determined from the use of this word is that he was over twenty-five and under forty years of age. As we read in the ninth chapter of his being commissioned by the high priest to lead a band of men to Damascus for the purpose of seizing upon any of the disciples of Christ who might be in that city, it is not very probable that he was what we should now consider very young.¹

Olshausen.

St. Stephen was led out of the city to be put to death. Earth rejected him from the number of her sons. The saints and servants of God have here no abiding city: they seek a heavenly, whither their Lord has gone before, and where their treasure is laid up.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

(59) *And they stoned Stephen,² calling upon God, and saying (ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα),³ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

Ps. xxxi. 5.
Luke xxiii. 46.
Acts ix. 14.

This proto-martyr, who was but just called into the ministry of Christ's Church, had all the apostles of Christ and his survivors, though against them we should have supposed that the first assault of the infuriated multitude would have been directed.

Bengel.

It is noteworthy that nothing is said of the sufferings of the martyr; all pain and anguish is as nothing, and unworthy of record, when the glory and the happiness of an endless life with the Father and Christ are to be the lot of the sufferer.

Lange.

As St. Stephen laid down his life in testimony to the truth of Christ's Divinity, so is the doctrine of the Incarnate God manifested in all that he says and does. He calls upon God the Eternal Son.⁴ He invokes Him who was so lately

¹ "The terms young and old had among the ancients a large signification. Phavorinus from Hippocrates styles men young, νεανίσκος, till 28, and πρεσβύτερος, aged, from 49 to 56; elsewhere, that old age begins at 59, and he is young from 23 to 41 years. Varro in Cœlius Rhod. L. xxix. 21, speaks of them as young till 45, aged at 60. St. Chrysostom, Orat. de Petro et Paulo, computes that Paul might be 35 years old at his conversion, and he must have known the popular use of so usual a Greek expression."—*Elsley*.

² "Στέφανος. Hic nomen proprium ponitur, ut causa nominis aperiat.

Hic enim verè est coronatus."—*Hugo de S. Charo*.

³ "And they stoned Estephanos, praying and saying, Our Lord Jesus."—*Peschito Vers.* "Lapidabant Stephanum invocantem et dicentem."—*Vulg.* "Lapidoient Estienne; et luy invoquoit Jesus et disoit."—*Mons Vers.* "Steinigten Stephanum, der anrief und sprach: Herr Jesu."—*Luther*.

⁴ *Calling*, or invoking, and *saying*. "It is not directly said whom Stephen invoked, but the prayer which follows intimates that it was Jesus. Hence, then, the ellipsis is either to be left unsupplied, or supplied either by the name 'Jesus,' or by the words 'the

crucified, and to Him, the Lord Jesus, he commends his spirit at the moment of its departure from the earth. And in thus commending his soul to God, as well as in praying for his murderers, the first martyr for Christ attests the power of Christ within him, and closely imitates his Divine Master.

Limboreh.

Matt. v. 44.
Luke vi. 28;
xxiii. 34.
Acts ix. 40;
xx. 36;
xxi. 5.

(60) *And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.¹ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

He kneeled down in order to pray for his enemies; it would seem that until then he had stood to receive the blows from the stones. He bows not the knee for himself, secure of the mercy and the love of his Master: he kneels however to entreat for his enemies, whose hearts were hardened, and in whom was no mark of repentance. Their sin humbled him more than his own sufferings.²

Hugo de S.
Charo.
Lyttleton.

It has been asked why Stephen prayed first for himself, and commended his soul to Christ before his prayer for his murderers; whereas Christ, whose example he closely follows, and whose death he has evidently in mind in the midst of his own suffering, prayed first for His murderers, then afterwards commended His soul to His Father. In this have we the difference between our Blessed Lord and His servant. Christ was sinless, and needed not to pray for Himself; whereas Stephen, though a great saint in the Church of Christ, needed the forgiveness of the Saviour unto whose hand he committed his spirit.

Sylveira.

He *cried with a loud voice*, a token of the earnestness of his prayer. Thus David says, *I will cry unto God with my*

Lord,' but not, as in our English version, by the name 'God,' calling upon God. The effect of this interpretation is to draw away the attention from Jesus as the person to whom the prayer was addressed, and thus to obscure a strong proof of the Divinity of Christ."—*Gloag on the Acts of the Apostles*.

¹ "Μη στήσῃς is used in the sense of 'retribuere,' as in Matt. xxvi. 15, agreeably to the Hebrew usage of כָּלַף, to weigh, to weigh for one. In its complete shape the expression stands thus, ἵσταναι ἐν ζυγῷ, to place upon the balance. Compare Schleusner's Lexicon, as the LXX render the word ἵστημι. Herodotus, ii. 65, uses ἵσταναι σταθμῷ in the very same

manner."—*Olshausen*. See also *Elshner* in loco.

² "'Tis remarkable that he kneeled down, when he prayed for his enemies (that stood when he prayed for himself), showing the greatness of their sin, that could not easily be forgiven, and therefore the earnestness of his piety, 'qui plus illorum dolebat peccata quam sua vulnera.'"—*Sparke's Scintillula*. "Fiducia plenus pro se ipso stans orat, et timens pro illis genua flectit. . . . Non flectit pro se, ut non videatur metuere aut cedere tormentis et morti, contra quæ invictus erat; sed inclinatur et flectit pro inimicis, quia fortior est morte dilectio."—*Aresius*.

voice, even unto God will I cry with my voice, and He shall hearken unto me. By so doing he made confession of the Divinity of Christ. He cried with a loud voice upon One who was no longer upon earth, but had passed into the heavens, and whom he calls *Lord*. In thus doing he has supplied us with an answer to those who say that the Father alone is to be invoked, and that though prayer may be offered up through the Son, yet not to the Son. The prayer and the invocation is here to the Second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity.

Ps. lxxvii. 1.

Lorinus.

Estius.

And in this death of Stephen we are taught lessons of preparation for our own death-beds—

(1) In his care for the spirit, whilst he disregarded what he suffered in the body—*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*.

(2) In his invoking the name and the help of God, not trusting to his own sufferings for Christ's sake, nor to his own merits and deservings.

(3) In the public confession of his faith in the Saviour, his acknowledgment of Christ, not only as his Redeemer, but also as his Lord and his God.

Ferus.

(4) In his forgiveness of those who were then slaying him, and in his prayer for their forgiveness at God's hand.

Tirinus.

And we have here not merely an example of prayer for others, we have also an encouragement to pray as he did. His prayer was answered in the conversion of one who was then a persecutor of the saints, though afterwards one of the most illustrious of the servants of Christ, and probably also in the conversion of others who witnessed his death. Had Stephen not thus prayed, the Church might not have enrolled Paul in the number of her ministers,¹ but the martyr's dying prayer was answered; and thus did God, from those tones which deprived him of his mortal life, *raise up children unto Abraham*.

Augustine.
Lyttleton.
Matt. iii. 6.

He fell asleep, for with the slaughter of the body the soul was at once at rest, such as men experience in sleep. The martyrdom of God's saints is for themselves sleep and rest after the toil of battle; as to God, it is a sacrifice acceptable in His sight; as to the Church of which they are members,

Dion. Carth.

¹ "Si S. Stephanus non orasset, ecclesia Paulum non haberet: sed deo erectus est Paulus, quia in terra inclinatus exauditus est Stephanus."—*Augustine, Ser. i. de Sanctis*. "May we not justly add to that, if Stephen had not prayed for Saul, heaven had had no Stephen, or Stephen had had no heaven? Suffering itself is but a

stubbornness, and a rigid and stupid standing under an affliction; it is not a humiliation, a bending under God's hand, if it be not done in charity."—*Donne's Sermons, Sermon. cxlvi*. "Dilectio inimicorum facit ut simus filii Dei, et ut in ipsa filiatione perseveremus."—*Sylveira*.

Quesnel.
Royard.
[End of
Epistle for St.
Stephen's
Day.]

it is the seed and the presage of future victory. And this word *sleep* points to a future awakening of him who was about to rest from his labours. It is the promise that he will awake from his bed of death, and rise to new life.¹

¹ "*Obdormivit in Domino. Felix somnus cum requie, requies cum voluptate, voluptas cum satietate, satietas cum securitate, securitas cum æterni-*

tate. Obdormivit, inquit, in Domino absorptus in claritatis abyssum et inter Dei sui brachia requiescens."—*Petrus Damian. in Hom.*

Note A.—HARRAN.

The general opinion of modern times is that Harran or Charran was situated between the Khabour and the Euphrates, and a ruined town which still bears the name of Harran on the river Bilik (Smith's Dictionary) has been commonly supposed to have been the place where Terah and Abraham settled after leaving Ur (Bochart in Phaleg. i. 14; Ewald in Geschichte, i. 384; and Smith's Dictionary of the Bible sub voce). A place of this name is mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions, e.g. in that of Tiglath Pileser i col. vi. 71, "ten full-grown powerful bullocks in Kharran and by the banks of the Khabour I killed." In the inscriptions from Khorsabad, Kharran is mentioned (line 10) with Baalbek; and in the obelisk of Salmaneser with other conquered North Mesopotamian towns. Though whether the Assyrian Harran or Harran of Damascus is meant is doubtful. There are, however, great difficulties in the way of accepting the identification of the place situate on the river Bilik, with the residence of Abraham, and an attentive consideration of the Bible narrative compelled the earlier commentators to extend Mesopotamia to the borders of Palestine, and to fix the site of this town in what they term the Syrian Mesopotamia, the country between the rivers Abana and Pharpar. It must be borne in mind that the name Mesopotamia, though usually applied to the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates, or to that between the Khabour and the Euphrates, is not a specific name, but may be given with equal propriety to any place which lies between two rivers. Thus Thomas

Aquinas (in Heb. xi. lect. 3) says, "Cum patre exiverat reversus iterum, sed ex præcepto Domini exiverat in Mesopotamiam Syria, ubi mortuo patre intendebat remanere, sed ex mandato Domini venit in terram Chanaan." Rupertus (in Genesis Com. lib. v. cap. 3), "Cur non dixit solum: Egredere de terra tua sed addidit et de cognatione tua: nisi quia alibi terra et alibi cognatio ejus erat? Siquidem terra ejus Chaldæa erat, cognatio autem ejus nunc in Aran, id est in Syria, profugiendo devenerat . . . Nam in Aran, id est in Syria, cognatio Abram illo egrediente residerit." Whatever place these writers may mean to indicate by the word Mesopotamia, Harran itself, they felt, from the necessities of the narrative, must have been on the borders of Canaan.

Thus the question remained until the recent discovery of a village bearing this name in the neighbourhood of Damascus, which Mr. Porter (Five Years in Damascus, p. 144, 2nd edit.) thus describes: "Harran of the Columns (Harrân el Awamîd) receives its name from three Ionic columns which stand in the centre of the village. There is no building connected with them, nor are the traces of any visible. In the streets and lanes I observed broken shafts and hewn stones, showing that some important structures once stood here." Dr. Beke in his "Origines Biblicæ" had some time before suggested that Harran where Abraham dwelt was a place not far from Damascus, and on the discovery by Mr. Porter of Harran el Awamîd he restated his reasons for coming to this conclusion.

this he is supported by Mr. Cyril Ham. But though the existence of s Harran was not generally known Western geographers before the publication of Mr. Porter's volume, though in these we must except Cellarius, Arabian geographers of the 12th century were aware of its existence, and Mel in his "Mashtarik" (edit. Gottingen, 1846, p. 125) says, "Harrân is one of the towns of the Ghutah of Damascus." It may however be remarked that great care is at all times required in the attempted identification of places which bear names descriptive of geographical position. All places between two rivers may be called by the name *Mesopotamia*. All plains have an equal right to the name *Padan*, *Charran* itself is in Cuneiform the name of a specific town and a general word for a road. So the name Charran was probably applied to a town situate on a road, at the junction of two roads. This explanation, however, lends no assistance in determining the position of the place of Abraham's sojourn. Both the towns were so situated: thus Herod, speaking of the Chaldean Harra, says, "It lay on an ancient road in a large plain surrounded by mountains," and refers to Winer's Real-terbuch; whilst Harran el Awamid situate on an important road leading from Chaldea to Palestine.

Though not impossible, it is highly probable that Charran or Harran on the Khabour is the town meant in Genesis, and there are great difficulties in assigning this as the site of the old Ur, whether Ur is represented by Har or by Mugheir. If by the former,

then Harra, which lies only a few hours' journey to the south, could hardly have been fixed on as a residence by Abraham when obeying the command to go forth from Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan, as Harra is scarcely nearer Canaan than Orfah; but if Mugheir represents the ancient Ur, then it is not conceivable that Abraham in seeking to go into the land of Canaan would direct his course in a line parallel with Canaan, and go considerably to the north of the land he sought without approaching its confines, and at the end of his long and needless journey be almost at the same distance from Canaan as when he set out on it. Departing, however, either from Orfah or from Mugheir—which latter town seems to have the greatest claim to be regarded as the city of Terah and of Abraham—the natural route of Terah and his children would lead them to Harra by Damascus on the road to Palestine, and within sight of the land promised to Abraham and to his seed. See Porter's *Five Years in Damascus*; a paper by Mr. Cyril Graham in the *Cambridge Essays*, 1858; an article by Dr. Beke in the *Geographical Society's Journal*, vol. xxxvi.; his introduction to *Jacob's Flight* (London, 1865); and papers in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, and in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Literature*, by Miss F. Corboux.

Though the name of Harra the brother of Abraham is in English identical with that of the city in which his father's family dwelt, in the Hebrew it differs from it, as the latter is spelt with Cheth ח not ה, and therefore should be written Charran.

Note B.—THE BENI HAMOR.

Who were the Beni Hamor or Amor, "the children of Hamor," of whom Abraham bought land? I believe the Beni Hamor, or Hamorites, "the children of Hamor" of Genesis xxxiv. and "the men of Hamor" of Genesis ix. 28, to be but other forms of the word "Amorites." The only objection to this conclusion of which I am aware is,

that the one word חֲמֹרִים commences with an aspirated guttural, the other word אֲמֹרִים with an unaspirated one. Both, that is, beginning with a letter of the same organ, though not with the same letter. As, however, letters organically allied are with more or less frequency interchangeable in Hebrew, this objection

does not appear a very formidable one.

(1) The objection itself, however, is in my opinion much weakened from the consideration of this fact. Hamor — *חמור* is in the Septuagint and in the New Testament unaspirated *Ἐμμώρ*. Again, *חמורי*, Amorite, which in the Egyptian records of the reign of Rameses the Third appears as *Amaru* or *Amor*, becomes *Hamru* in the Assyrian Cuneiform, which is dialectically in close alliance with the Hebrew. In Arabic, moreover, to this day many places in Canaan, formerly occupied by the Amorites, still retain names expressive of this fact, and these names are aspirated. Thus the names "Amir, "Ameri, "Ameriu, Dheigat el "Ameriu (Ravine of the Amorites), Rás "Amir (the ridge of the Amorite), Sheikh el "Amiri, and other spots "in the once fertile and populous mountains, the hill country of the Amorites," are thought by a learned traveller to identify these spots with this race (*Palmer's Desert of the Exodus*, pp. 290, 380). We have, then, in these various authorities Hamor unaspirated and Amorite aspirated, so that it seems clear that in either case the aspirate is only an accidental not an essential feature of the name.

(2) Shechem is within the territory which belonged to this powerful tribe. The Amorites in the west of the Jordan held possession of the hill country from Horeb and Kadesh Barnea in the south, to Carmel and the plain of Esdraelon in the north. On the east of the Jordan the territory which they wrested in later times from the Moabites extended from the river Jabbok to the river Arnon (see Ritter's *Geography of Palestine*, vol. i. pp. 124—127, Eng. trans., and *Palmer's Desert of the Exodus*, in index). In early days the Amorites seem to have been inferior in importance to the Hittites, among whom they dwelt. Hence Abraham bought land for a sepulchre in what was afterwards the Amorite country of the chief of a Hittite family, and the Hittites (*Cheta*=children of Heth) are at this time mentioned in Egyptian documents in conjunction with the

Amorites. In the days of Moses, however, these latter people had become paramount in this part of Canaan, and their name is applied even as early as the days of Joshua to all the enemies of Israel (Josh. xxiv. 17, see also Amos ii. 9). They were a warlike people, holding the fastnesses of the mountain country, and their name has even been supposed to have been given them from this circumstance (*חמור* =

cacumen, vertex arboris, princeps populi (Simon in Lexicon, and see Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 280.) Be this as it may, all the notices which we have of the Amorites prove that they were the lords of the hill country of Palestine (Num. xiii. 29; Deut. i. 19). Not bearing in mind that Shechem is on the slope of a mountain of more than ordinary strength, a military post of importance from the command which it gives its possessors over a pass connecting the coast with the country east of the Jordan, it is highly improbable that a powerful tribe occupying the whole country north and south of this point would have allowed this, the chief of their northern frontier, to have remained in the hands of another tribe. If, as we know was the case, the Amorites held the country from the Esdraelon to Hebron, and even further south, Shechem would necessarily have been in their hands. This is so evident, that the fact has led some persons to conclude that the Beni Hamor must have been at least an Amoritish family, a sub-tribe of the great and powerful family of the Amorites.

(3) But that the Beni-Hamor was but another form of the name Amorite when considered in conjunction with the fact first stated, made almost certain from this, that the translators of the Septuagint version so considered it. The account of the purchase of land by Jacob, which occurs in Genesis xxxiii. 19, is in the Hebrew — *וַיִּבְרָךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָקָה אָבִי מִיָּד הַחִמְרִי אֲבִי שִׁכֵּם*.

This the Septuagint translators render by *Kai ἐκρήσατο τὴν μερίδα τῆς ἀγροῦ οὗ ἔσθησεν ἐκ τῆς σηναι αὐτοῦ παρὰ Ἐμμώρ πατρὸς Συχέμ*.

from the sons of Emamor, but from Amor. In Judges ix. 28 it is *σὺν ἀνδράσιν* (ἄνδρες) Ἐμμώρ πατρός σου—In Joshua (xxiv. 32), however, the same Hebrew sentence again occurs, in place of translating it as in Genesis xxxiii. 19, the translators of the Septuagint version paraphrase the age by ἐκτίσται Ἰακώβ παρὰ τῶν ὁρραίων τῶν κατοικούντων ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν. So that, rightly or wrongly, the translators understood that the Amorites were the Amorites. In connection with this it may be noted that in Eccclus. L. 26, the Ethiop. version instead of the usual reading ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν Σικίμοις reads ὁ λαὸς Ἀμωραῖος ὁ, κ. τ. λ. So far as I am aware, however, it stands alone in this. Neither *Bretschneider* in his edition of Ecclesiasticus nor *Hendorf* in his edition of the Septuagint have adopted this reading, though *Ewald* favours it with favour. See his *Grammatik*, vol. iv.

Now if this conclusion be true, or even supposing it only highly probable, there is, then, nothing strange in the supposition that Abraham and Jacob should have bought of the same tribe land which belonged to that tribe. To purchase land for the last century or two in Scotland in certain districts an intending purchaser would still have had to buy it of the Camerons, the Macdonalds, the Macgregors, or the Frasers, or some other clan, and no reasonable doubt could be thrown on the fact of such purchase having been made, because at a considerable interval of time two such purchases should have been made of a tribe, or even of a chieftain, of the same name. By what rule Hamor, the name of the founder of the tribe, was borne in after-times by the chieftain of this tribe, or sub-tribe, we are not aware. This, however, has no immediate bearing upon the question before us.

Note C.—ΑΣΤΕΙΟΣ ΤΩ ΘΕῳ.

In the English version the Greek ἄσπετος τῷ θεῷ, "a form of Hebrew superlative" (*Hackett*), accurately translated *exceedingly fair*, though literally it might be rendered, in the margin, "fair to God." The *Vulgate* translation is—"fuit deus Deo;" in *Italian*, "fu molto bello a Dio;" in *Luther's German*, "er ein feines Kind vor Gott." In the *French Version* of *De Sacy* and of the *Mons translators* it is, "estoit admirable à Dieu;" but with this marginal note, "*Gr. beau à Dieu, c'est-à-dire, fort beau. Hébreux,*" whilst *Amelote* translates these words, "aimé de Dieu." And yet though it is a common Hebrew and Hellenic idiom to speak of that which is exceeding fair or great as fair or great to God, this usage has been elevated into the rank of contradiction, variation, or addition to the Mosaic history, and alleged as an instance of the mistakes made by St. Stephen. Thus a writer in *Smith's Dictionary* gives this as his objection to St. Stephen's speech—"The God-like loveliness of

Moses, not simply or according to Ex. ii. 2, the statement that he was a goodly child." On this passage *Krebs* (in *Observat. in Nov. Test. e Josepho*, 1755) remarks, "Hæc loquendi ratio, ab Ebræis petita, nihil aliud denotat, quam Mosen fuisse *venustissimum, formosissimum*. Nam quod quidam voci, τῷ θεῷ; vim, nescio quam, inesse volunt, ut denotet *coram Domino, apud Dominum*, id vero ejusmodi est, ut vix aliquem sensum habeat commodum." And in the LXX we have πόλις μεγάλη τῷ θεῷ—an *exceeding great city*. See also Psalm lxviii. 11; Isaiah xxviii; Wisd. vii. 4. *Amelote* says, "ἀσπετος qui est ici dans le grec, signifie *joli, bien-fait, élégant*. Exod. ii. 2. Ici non seulement le Latin, mais le Syria, l'ont pris pour *χαριεὺς gratus*. Comme עֲבֹד se prend en tous ces sens. L'Arabe a traduit *consacré à Dieu*." עֲבֹד, pulcher *καλός*. *Ges. in Thesaur.* sub voce. On this idiom a modern critic observes, "אֲדָמָה and אֲדָמָה are frequently placed in construction with Hebrew nouns to express merely a superlative; e. g. אֲדָמָה

אַלְהִים, 'a mighty prince,' Gen. xxiii. 6; חֲזָקָה, אַלְהִים, 'a strong panic,' Gen. xxxv. 5; בְּחִילָה אַלְהִים, 'violent struggles,' Gen. xxx. 8; תְּרֵמֶת רֵחָה, 'a very deep sleep,' 1 Sam. xxvi. 12; לְאֵלִים, עִיר גְּדֹלָה, 'an exceeding great city,' Jonah iii. 3; בְּרָרָה אֵל, 'great mountains;' אֲרָזֵי אֵל, 'great cedars.' Compare Gen. x. 8, גִּבּוֹר צֹדֵד לִפְנֵי, 'a very mighty huntsman;' and the Greek ἀσσεῖος ὡς θεῶν, לִפְנֵי רֵחָה, 'exceedingly comely,' Acts vii. 20."—*Preston's Notes on the Book of Genesis*, p. 4.

There is, then, not the slightest tradition or variation between passage in Ex. ii. 2 and that in vii. 20, and it is hard to understand how such a variation could have alleged in a *Dictionary* where, on the whole, the scholarship is respectable. It is hard to suppose that any work in this dictionary was altogether ignorant of the rudiments of Hebrew, that he had not at hand so common a school-book as *Elsley*, or such ordinary commentators as *Grotius* and *Whitby*.

Note D.—MOLOCH.

Moloch, the king of gods, from מֶלֶךְ; or from "Melkarth" at Tyre, "the god of the city," and Saturn, or the Sun, are the same as Baal, or Baal samen, "the Lord of Heaven," in Phœnicia. In Syriac and Arabic Moloch takes the form of מִלְכִּים. In 1 Kings xi. 5, 7, the name occurs under the forms Moloch and Milcom, it is there spoken of as the abomination of the Ammonites. The worship of this deity was, as the various names by which the idol was known in various countries will show, widely diffused. It was in its origin, at least, a kind of Sabæan worship, and hence the seven cavities in the image (*Whitby*) and the seven chapels of its temple (*Goodwyn*) in reference to the seven planets of the ancient cosmogony. That Baal and Moloch are one is evident not only from the characteristics of the god and the worship given to him, but from the words of the prophet, "*They built the high places of Baal, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire into Moloch*" (Jer. xxxii. 35), and "*They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal*" (Jer. xix. 5). He was a god of terror and destruction. The god of consuming fire, the burning sun, the god who

smites the land with unfruitfulness and pestilence, dries up the springs and begets poisonous winds. See reference to these characteristics in Kings xviii.; where even the prophecies of Baal are represented as invoking their god, when the land was suffering from drought, and in the answer of the God of Israel, Elijah at verses 44, 45. The most acceptable sacrifice to this god were little children. The idol had a bull's head, and his arms were outstretched. On these arms when glowing hot victims were laid by their parents, when, writhing from the heat of metal, they rolled off, they fell into flames below. Drums drowned the cries of the children, and hence the place of sacrifice was called Topi from תַּר, a drum. Besides children, animals were offered to Moloch, she-lambs, bulls, and, at least amongst the Persians, horses also. See *Plutarch's Superstitions*; *Goodwyn's Moses*; *Aaron*, Book IV. chap. ii.; *Cassiodorus in Apparatus Hist. Crit.* p. 4; *Dollinger's The Gentile and the Christian* (Eng. transl. vol. i; 426); *Selous de diis Syr.*, and *Lightfoot in Hebrew et Talmud*. Milton has accurately noted these characteristics of the worship of Moloch—

"First Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that past through fire
To his grim idol."—*Paradise Lost*, i. 392—396.

CHAPTER VIII.

EMPEROR OF ROME,	TIBERIUS, <i>died</i> , March 16, A.D. 37.
PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,	<i>vacant.</i>
HIGH PRIESTS,	{ CAIAPHAS, removed, A.D. 36.
	{ JONATHAN, SON OF ANNAS.

(1) *And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.*

Acts vii. 58;
xi. 19; xxii.
20.

HITHERTO St. Luke has spoken of the witness of the apostles to the resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem, the signs and miracles by which the truth of their doctrine was attested in that city, and the beginnings of the persecution there, which rose to its height in the death of Stephen. Here he tells of the outburst of rage which took place at his martyrdom, by which the teachers and members of this, *the church which was at Jerusalem*, were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, and proceeds to relate the conversion of the people outside the Jewish nation, and the effects of the scattered members of the church, first in Samaria, and afterwards in other parts of the Roman empire; for the scattering of the Christians was at the same time a scattering of the seed of life.¹

Tertullian.

Some have thought that these words, *And Saul was consenting to his death*, should be read with the closing verse of the previous chapter. They seem, however, more properly to belong to the present. The consent of Saul to the death of Stephen was that act which whetted his fury against those who believed with Stephen, and urged him to *make havoc of the Church*. One act leading on to the other.

¹ "Crudelitas vestra illecebra est in fin. "Sicut grana seminis ut ex agis sectæ. Plures efficitur, quoties ipsis multiplicaretur seges fidei."—*Hugo de S. Charo.*
etitur à vobis; semen est sanguis Christianorum."—*Tertullian, Apolog.*

Hence St. Luke tells us that *at that time*, or on that very day (ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ), that is, the *persecution* which then broke out, arose out of, or was contemporaneous with, the death of Stephen. The pouring out of his blood inciting the multitude to further acts of violence and murder. That the general persecution arose out of the particular act of persecution appears from St. Luke interposing the account of St. Stephen's burial between the verses in which he speaks of the *persecution* and *havock* committed in the Church.¹ In this persecution, according to Dorotheus bishop of Tyre, confirmed by writings attributed to Hippolytus the martyr, we are told that Nicanor was put to death at the same time as his brother deacon St. Stephen. It is said also that two thousand were massacred in this outburst of fanaticism. This happened, it is believed, in the absence of the Roman Governor. It must have been a great persecution to have *scattered abroad* all the Christian converts, or at least the whole of the teachers and prominent members of the Church which was at Jerusalem. In thus flying to the regions of Judea and Samaria, the members of the Church were mindful of Christ's words, *When they persecute you in this city of Jerusalem, flee ye into another.*

This is the first time we read of *the Church which was at Jerusalem*. The Church not only increased by means of persecution, it seemed to grow out of, and to owe its origin to, persecution. And not only so, God used the malignity of the persecutors of His Church to scatter abroad His word, for even the persecutor Saul now began to serve the cause of Christ, whom afterwards he preached, and in his fury he was extending the kingdom of Christ, even though he did it ignorantly.

All, that is, all the teachers of the Church, *except the Apostles*, not all the baptized, not, as some interpret these words, the whole body of those on whom the Spirit had descended on the day of Pentecost, or all the disciples of Christ properly so called, those who had followed Christ whilst He was on earth, and had been sent out by Him. This is needlessly to press the meaning of the word *all*.

¹ "Ad hoc tempus referri potest, quod Lucianus Gamalieleum in revelatione dixisse memorat. 'Nicodemum quod Christi discipulus esset, amotum principatu à Judeis et anathematizatum (quod Judæis est, extra synagogam fieri) et pulsum in exilium sed se illum proprio in agro susceptum aluisse et vestivisse usque ad vitæ exitum ac tandem juxta Stephanum honorificè sepe-

tivisse."—Lorinus.

² "Tout sert aux desseins de Dieu. Les uns sont dispersez pour servir à purifier et perfectionner leur propre foi ou pour en porter ailleurs l'exemple de la semence: les autres demeurent pour apprendre aux pasteurs à ne pas toujours fuir la persecution et pour soutenir l'Eglise dans le combat."—Quesnel.

Bengel.
Lange.

Salmeron.

Acts vi. 5.

Matt. x. 23.
Salmeron.

Baxter.
Lange.

Wesley.

Cajetan.

Lorinus.

which ordinarily means the great body, the chief part of those of whom it is used.¹

Except the Apostles. For the spiritual needs of the people, in order to declare the truths of the gospel among the people, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem. In this we have:—

Bengel.

(1) A proof of their courage, and of the change wrought in them by the gift of the Spirit. Those who now braved the terrors of persecution were the same who previously forsook their Lord, and fled when He was seized.

(2) A proof of their ready obedience to the command of Christ, who had bidden them tarry for a time at Jerusalem, and after that to go into all the world and preach the gospel.²

Luke xxiv. 49.
Matt. xxviii.
19.
Bengel.

It may be that the respect of the people for the Apostles, who had wrought miracles of healing before them, restrained at this time the fury of those who persecuted to the death the other members of Christ's Church, or that the Apostles endured with greater firmness than the rest of the brethren. We, however, are taught by their remaining, that there is a time to fly, and a time to remain at our post. We have examples in the Bible of those who fled for a time from persecution, but who fled not from their duty. Even Elijah, the oldest of God's prophets under the old dispensation, was added to *turn away from the heat of Ahab's persecution, and to hide . . . by the brook Cherith*; and *Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh* for a while; and *Saul by night was let down by the wall in a basket*, and so escaped for a time from those who sought his life; and above all our great Exemplar, Christ, at one time removed Himself for a while from the fury of His persecutors, lest He should add to their sin, and *hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of those who sought His life*. It is wonderful to avoid persecution by flight, though we may not fly when by so doing we leave God's work undone, and

Alford.

1 Kings xvii.
3.
Exod. ii. 15.

Acts ix. 25.

John viii. 59.

¹ πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν. "Non omnes Christiani an fugiebant, sed multi perierunt."—*Plerique*, v. 9, 26, 31. Ponitur item vocabulum πᾶς ut Hebr. כָּל, r. xlv. 11, haud raro ita, ut magnum numerum significet, ut Matt. ii. 3, iii. 1, xxi. 26; Mar. iv. 11; Act. ii. 5; r. xxx. 14. Ubi interpretes Alexandrini nomen רב multitudo, expresse-
runt vocabulo πᾶς."—*Kuinoel*.

² "There is a very ancient tradition, and in writers of the second century, that the Apostles were commanded by their Lord to continue their preaching

at Jerusalem for twelve years. Thus Petri Prædicatio (Liber Apocryphus), ap. Clem. Alex. Strom. vi. 5, 43: διὰ τοῦτο φησιν ὁ Πέτρος εἰρηκέναι τὸν Κύριον τοῖς ἀποστόλοις· ἂν μὲν οὖν τις θελήσῃ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ μετανοῆσαι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος μου πιστεύειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν, ἀφεθήσονται αὐτῷ αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. μετὰ δώδεκα ἔτη ἐξέλθετε εἰς τὸν κόσμον, μή τις εἰπῇ οὐκ ἀκηκόαμεν. See also Apollonius ap. Euseb. Hist. v. 18. This tradition is countenanced by Bishop Pearson, Lectiones in Act. Apost. iv. xi."—*Humphrey*.

when the good of our neighbours requires us to remain at our post.

Ferus.

A large part of the peril to which the Church of God is exposed comes from within. It was in *the holy city*, the city of peace, that the first persecution of the Church of Christ arose.¹

Novarinus.

Gen. xxiii. 2;
1. 10.
2 Sam. iii.
31.

(2) *And devout men carried² Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.*

Matt. xxvii.
57.
Lange.

The general opinion is that these *devout men*, who are not styled brethren, were not Christians, at least not avowedly so, and that, like Joseph of Arimathea who buried Christ, though not professedly disciples of Christ, they were men who did not share in the zeal of Saul and in his hatred of the Christians, but regarded the doctrines of the Saviour with favour, and admired the boldness of the Apostles in their preaching. They were *devout men*, fearing God more than man, who by their care in the burial of Stephen made their first open confession of belief. Had they been acknowledged as members of *the Church . . . at Jerusalem* they would have been persecuted like the rest who suffered from the new-born fury of the people, and would hardly have been allowed to bury the proto-martyr.

Beelen.
Olshausen.
Bengel.

Rutnoel.

Tradition says that Gamaliel, who is supposed to have been the teacher of St. Stephen as well as of Saul, was one of those who came forward to perform the rites of burial on the body of his scholar, and that, convinced by his speech, or converted at the sight of St. Stephen's constancy to death, he from that time embraced the religion of Christ.

The burial of the dead is here presented to us as an act of Christian piety. It is so:—

1 Cor. vi. 19.

(1) Because the bodies of the baptized are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

Phil. iii. 21.
Wordsworth.

(2) Because in committing their bodies to the grave we do so knowing that they will rise again, in glory, and like unto the *glorious body* of Christ.³

* 1 "Prima hæc persecutio censeri potest, quam passa Dei ecclesia est: cœpit autem Jerosolymis, quæ, *Urbs pacis et sancta civitas*, dicebatur. Plerunque ita accidit ut ubi magis sanctitas et unio esse debet, ibi major discordia regnet, major impietas."—*Novarinus*.

2 "Curaverunt autem Stephanum. Syrus, *positum in arca sepelierunt*. Græcum *κοπιζω* significat *curare, ges-*

tare, portare, estque subinde verbum funerale, significans *mortuum efferre et sepelire*. Quocirca Noster uti generalius, ita plenius vertit *curaverunt*. Curare enim funus et corpus defuncti, est illud abluere, componere, ungere, vestire, loculo imponere, efferre, sepelire, justa persolvere, omnemque funeris pompam adornare."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

3 "Curaverunt. Vulg. Græcè *συνεκόμισαν*, comportarunt, h. e. sepulturæ

They made *great lamentation over him*. This was in accordance not only with natural feeling, but in compliance with the custom of the Jews. Thus when the body of Jacob was carried up to Canaan to be buried, we are told that the *very great company* which went up with the body *mourned with a great and very sore lamentation*; and in the later history of the Jews, when Mattathias was buried, *all Israel made great lamentations for him*; and at the funeral of Judas Maccabeus *all Israel made great lamentation for him, and mourned many days*.¹ In doing so, however, at the burial of Stephen great boldness was demanded, since it was a rule amongst the Jews that lamentations were not allowed for those who had died by command of the Sanhedrim, and even had his death been an irregular, unlawful act of an infuriated people, the display of grief was in such a case dangerous, because likely to draw down upon the mourners the fury of the populace.

Hardouin.

Gen. i. 9, 10.

1 Mac. ii. 70.

1 Mac. iv. 39;
ix. 20.

Lightfoot.

(3) *As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling² men and women committed them to prison.*

Acts vii. 58;
ix. i. 13, 21;
xxii. 4;
xxvi. 10, 11.
1 Cor. xv. 9.
Gal. i. 13.
Phil. iii. 6.
1 Tim. i. 13.

Whilst the funeral of Stephen was going on Saul was following up his participation in his death by the *havock*³ which he made in the Church; and the people, excited by the blood which they had shed, now began a fierce persecution of all who shared with Stephen in his belief. But Saul not only *committed them to prison*; he says elsewhere that he *persecuted* those who were of *this way unto the death*, and that when the saints . . . were put to death he gave his voice against them.

Salmeron.

Acts xxii. 4.

Acts xxvi. 10.

This zeal of Saul was the more conspicuous because he was not a priest, not one of the tribe of Levi, to whom the defence of the temple-worship and of the truths revealed by

tradiderunt. 'Græcis fruges congerere in horrea συγκομιζεν propriè dicebatur. Inde translatus fuit ad significationem *sepeliendi*, quia sepultura quod terrenum erat in homine velut in horreum suum condebatur.' Valckenaer ad h. l."—Beelen.

¹ "Scriptura divina producere nos lachrymas, quasi evaporando dolere permittit."—Paulinus Ep. ad Pamin.

² "Σύρων—English version, 'haling,' old English for *hauling*."—Humphrey.

³ "ἐλυμαίνετο—Verbum *λυμαίνεισθαι* non solum de lupis, ursis, reliquis-

que feris rapacibus, agros depopulantibus et pecudes interimentibus dicitur, verum etiam de hominibus. Sic apud Philonem de Creat. princ., p. 734. οὐδὲ πόλειως ἐχθρὰς τὴν ἀρετῶσαν γῆν ἐφίησι λυμαίνεσθαι δροῦντας, ἢ δεινδροτομοῦντας ἐπὶ φθορᾷ καρπῶν."—Loesner.

"This is the only place where this word is found in the New Testament; it is equivalent to *πορθεῖω*, which Paul himself, in Gal. i. 13, applies to the persecutions he had directed against the Church."—Olshausen.

God belonged. He persecuted from excessive zeal and because of his Pharisaic ardour.

Matt. x. 23.
Acts xi. 19.

(4) *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*

John xix. 30.

What men look upon as defeat is often in the things of God only the greater victory, and the faith is deepened and propagated when it seems almost trampled out. The apparent extinction of the faith is oftentimes but the sowing of the seed of a future and abundant harvest, and when Christ bowed his head on the cross and gave up the ghost amid the taunts of the multitude, then was His work *finished*, the redemption of man accomplished, and the power of Satan and of death overthrown. Outwardly all was failure, yet then was the kingdom of God set up never to be overturned.¹

Sanchez.

Acts xi. 19.

Rom. xvi. 7.

Though the disciples were *scattered abroad* yet this did not damp their zeal, they *went everywhere preaching the word*, confining, however, that *preaching* to the Jews, and not yet delivering the message of salvation to the heathen. Then it is believed, and apparently on good grounds, that Ananias went to Damascus and proclaimed the truth in that city, and Andronicus and Junia, the *kinsmen* of Saul, and converts *before* him, fled to Rome and settled there.

Bengel.

Acts xi. 19.

St. Luke now follows the course of Philip's teaching,² then relates the manner in which the Apostles were instructed as to God's message to the Gentiles, and resumes in the eleventh chapter the general consequences of the persecution against the Church, using there again the words with which he here breaks off, *Now they that were scattered abroad before the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word.*

Acts vi. 5.

(5) *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.* (6) *And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.*

The Apostles had been commissioned by their Lord to be

¹ "Dieu cache souvent sa mission sous le voile d'une persecution et d'une fuite, pour tromper et confondre le monde et le demon. Dieu a plus d'une fin dans sa conduite; et souvent celle

que les hommes y croient voir clairement, ou ne l'est point du tout, ou n'est pas la principale."—*Quesnel*.

² On Philip, see note A at end of this chapter.

his witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, and now the fury of the people brought about the accomplishment of this work, and having witnessed to Him in Jerusalem, they, by the mouth of those whom they had instructed and ordained, preached the word in all Judæa and in Samaria; when this had been done they went forth themselves unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Here we have the account of the preaching Christ to the people of Samaria, a mixed people, partly of Israelitish, partly of heathen origin, and standing mid-way between the Jew and the heathen. They stood in close relationship to the Jews, and therefore it was their first duty to make them sharers in the blessing of Christ's gospel. It was at the same time a lesson and discipline of charity to make the Jews, who had no dealings with the Samaritans, and who were embittered against them because of their nearness in origin and faith, the first ministers and teachers of the Samaritans.

Philip was one of the seven deacons appointed with Stephen, and stands next to him on the list of deacons. When his companion was taken away, then his fellow-servant takes up the work from which Stephen had been removed. He had not the full powers possessed by the Apostles, though he had the gift of the Spirit and ability to preach Christ. When he had preached, the Apostles themselves must go down to complete the work of the Evangelist.

St. Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who records the healing and the gratitude of the Samaritan leper, and the parable in which Christ commended the charity of the Samaritan towards the wounded Jew, and here he dwells upon the history of the proclamation of the gospel to these same Samaritans, who had been already prepared for the preaching of Philip by their longing for the Messiah, and by the visit of Christ to the very city of Sychar. Of their preparation to receive the truth our blessed Lord witnesses: *Lift up your eyes and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest.*

Some have doubted whether a city of Samaria must mean Sychar, the chief city,¹ but there can be little question that Sychar is meant. In St. John's Gospel we are told that

¹ The ancient capital of Israel was Shechem שֶׁכֶּם, rendered by the LXX Sychem (Συχῆμ) and Sikima (Σικίμα). This is the only name by which this city was known during the Old Testament history. In the New Testament

we have it under the name of Sychar (Συχαρ), John iv. 5, and Sychem, Acts vii. 16. These were its Scriptural names; it was known, however, by other names. Josephus says it was called by the people of the country Mabortha

Acts i. 8.

Stier.

Sylveira.

Bengel.

Beelen.

Luke xvii. 11—19.

Luke x. 30—37.

Beelen.

John iv. 5, 25. Hofmeister. John iv. 35: see Blunt in Und. Coincid.

Beelen. Olshausen.

Deelen.

Christ came to a city of Samaria, and the Evangelist adds that it was called *Sychar*, so that there is no force in this criticism. Philip came to the city, not to the region or the country parts of Samaria. Probably a larger number of Jews resided in the city than in the country, or the people of the city might from the teaching of Christ have been better prepared than those of the agricultural districts to accept the truth.

Acts iv. 12.

Isa. xl. 24.
Jer. xxiii. 6.

Ferus.

He preached Christ unto them—That is the whole course of Christian truth. To preach Christ, is to preach that He died for our sins, that He arose again for our justification, and that there is salvation in His name and in no other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. To preach Christ is to preach righteousness, for the source of all righteousness in man is the Lord our righteousness. To preach Christ is to preach the need of sanctification, for he is the Holy One. To preach Christ is to preach the forgiveness of sins by His sacrifice and redemption from slavery to Satan. To preach Christ is to preach distrust of ourselves, and distrust of our works, and to point to the source of all holiness and of all strength, the Lord, the Author and Giver of all grace to man.

Mark xii. 37.
Ferus.

It is significantly said that *the people with one accord gave heed unto these things which Philip spake*. Whilst the Jews rejected Christ, the Samaritans received Him and believed.¹ Whilst the rulers everywhere persecuted those who called on His name, the people, the common people, heard Him and the Apostles gladly.

Mark xvi. 17.
Luke iv. 41.

(7) *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies,² and that were lame,*

(Wars iv. 8, § 1). And Pliny calls it *Mamortha* (v. *Winer*) most probably from the Hebrew *מִמְרְתָא*, a pass, from its situation between two hills, Gerizim and Ebal. Having been destroyed, it was rebuilt by Vespasian after the war in Palestine, and called Neapolis, "the new town," from whence its present name of Nablus or Nâbulus. In the reign of Omri the hill of Tirzah was made the summer residence of the court, and a city gradually grew around the palace, and became the official capital of Israel. This city has the same name as the region itself, and was called Samaria. Having under-

gone several sieges, it was at length destroyed by Hyrcanus, and a new city took its place, which in compliment to Augustus was called Sebaste. This city is represented by the present village of Sebastieh. See *Reland, Palest.*; *Ritter's Geography of Palestine*, vol. iv.; *Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*; and *Mill's Nablus and the Modern Samaritan*.

¹ "Ex presenti capitulo et ex Samaritanæ mulieris historia prompti animi ad credendum, hanc gentem fuisse probatur."—*Bede*.

² "*παρὰλυμῖνοι*. This word is never used for *paralytic* by St. Matthew

were healed. (8) *And there was great joy in that city.*

The miracles which St. Luke notices are not merely those of the cure of the diseased in body. Unclean spirits, he tells us, were also cast out from those who had previously been possessed. He thus makes a clear distinction between spiritual possession and infirmity arising from diseases of the body. The spirits he speaks of he calls *unclean spirits*,¹ because they dwelt in, and preferred to dwell in, those who were unclean by evil living, and whose uncleanness was caused by the spirit which they had invited to take possession of their hearts. Of the cures effected on the bodies of men St. Luke especially mentions those by which *palsies* and lameness were healed, these being two infirmities of the body which are difficult of cure, so that their removal gave the clearer evidence of Divine power.

The effects of the preaching of the gospel are these:—

(1) Impurity is expelled from the heart of the penitent.

(2) The palsied soul, unable of itself to do aright, is strengthened to resist temptation, and to keep in the way of God's commandments.

(3) Sorrow of heart is turned into great joy.

Beelen.

Lange.

(9) *But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: (10) To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.*

Acts v. 30;
xiii. 6.

The meaning is more evident if we follow the Syriac version. There was a certain man called Simon living for some time before in the city and using sorcery,² and by means of this he astonished the people. He gave out "I am the

or St. Mark, who used the word *παρὰ-λυτικός* *ten* times (Matt. iv. 24, viii. 6, ix. 2, 6; Mark ii. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10); but is used in St. Luke's Gospel (v. 18, 24), where the word *παρὰ-λυτικός* does not occur; and it is used twice in the Acts (here and ix. 33), where the word *παρὰ-λυτικός* does not occur; and thus we have a double coincidence between the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of St. Luke."—*Wordsworth*.

¹ "It is worthy of observation that St. Luke in the Acts never employs the term demons (*δαίμονια*) in speaking of

those possessed, and yet he himself in the Gospel has employed this term oftener than the other Evangelists. From which one may infer that the power of possession was feebler after the death of Christ. 1 John iii. 8; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14."—*Bengel*.

² "As from *μάγος μαγεύω* and *μαγεία* were formed, so from *γοηός* came the forms *γοητεύω* and *γοητεία*. Both words are to be found only in this passage in the New Testament."—*Olshausen*.

great one," as the magicians when they wrought their enchantments in the eyes of Pharaoh said, *This is the finger of God*. Some have supposed that Simon meant by these words, "I am the great one," to claim to be the Messiah, the Word of God, or the Comforter promised to mankind.¹

Exod. viii. 19. We know that the Samaritans as well as the Jews expected that the Messiah would appear at that time, and this longing of the people for something higher than the idolatries or ceremonial worship which they practised, the unusual ferment of men's minds, was shown in their readiness to receive the teaching of Philip, and was a cause why they so readily accepted the word which he delivered.

John iv. 25. Lorinus. Olshausen.

The people gave out that Simon was *the great power of God*.² This false teacher is generally regarded as one of the first who corrupted Christianity with what was afterwards called Gnosticism. The Gnostics, though differing amongst themselves, yet concurred in supposing the existence of a multitude of divine powers, which had emanated in time from the eternal first principle of light. The most elevated of these existences or beings they styled æons, and one of these, the chief it may be, *the great power of God*, they deemed to have appeared in the person of Simon.³

Mosheim. Burton. Olshausen.

Simon gave out *that himself was some great one*. Philip preached Christ, and worked signs and wonders, in attestation of the truth of what he preached, but his preaching was not of himself. Simon the sorcerer, however, is characteristically said to preach himself, he gave out that he was the great one expected by the people.

Salmeron.

(11) *And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.* (12) *But when they beliered Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of*

Acts i. 3.

¹ οὗτος ἐστὶν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ μεγάλη. "Such is the title which he bore before he had heard of Christ, and there is no reason to think that he afterwards raised his pretensions and identified himself with God. He gave himself out as *the great power of God*, i. e. a person in whom Divine power resided; and after he had heard the Apostles he seemed to have so far enlarged his doctrine as to have said, that the God, whose minister he was, and who had always been worshipped in Samaria, had revealed Himself to the Jews by

His Son, and to the rest of the world by the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost, by which God was revealed to the Gentiles, resided in himself."—*Burton's Bampton Lectures*, Lect. iv. pp. 106-7.

² On *Simon Magus* see note C at the end of this chapter.

³ "Apparet hic dæmonis astutia, qui Christi se simiam facit. Primus Christi Apostolus, *Simon* fuit, quem vocavit Petrum: diabolus primum ei antagonistam et pseudo-apostolum, *Simonem* Magum opposuit."—*Novarinus*.

Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Though the Samaritans had for a time yielded to the sorceries and to the claims of Simon, they now believed Philip, who preached to them the gospel of the kingdom of God in the name of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah, by whose death men had the power of entering into that Church, and by whom the gate of the Church was opened to all alike, *both men and women.*¹

Syriac Vers.

Lienard.

(13) *Then Simon himself believed also : and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.*

He who knew all the tricks of sorcery was astonished at the miracles wrought by Philip, and he whose insight into, sharpened by his acquaintance with, magic, owned the greater power, working through the instrumentality of Philip, and confessed that these were true miracles. And as a consequence of this wonder Simon *believed*—a momentary, though as it would seem a real, belief, from which, however, he so utterly fell, that Peter could say, *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.* But though his faith was imperfect for a time, *he continued with Philip*, wondering at the works which he so wrought, and at the signs which so greatly exceeded those which he had been able to do. It was this, as it would seem, rather than the sublimity of the doctrines which Philip taught, or the spirituality of his life, which attracted Simon. Yet did Philip baptize him, leaving to the Searcher of all hearts the question of the sincerity of Simon.²

Fromond.

Verse 21.

Lorinus.

Here we are reminded of this truth, that the tares will always be mingled with the wheat, and grow up with it, and be hardly distinguished from it. Only in the time of the harvest will there be a separation between the wheat and the tares, when God will make evident those who have been admitted like Simon into the membership of the visible Church without having *any lot in it.*³

Ferus.

¹ "Il n'y a point de charmes qui ne cèdent à ceux de la grace ; parce que rien ne résiste au Tout-puissant. Tout l'artifice et toute la puissance de l'enfer fondent en sa présence, comme la cire devant le feu."—*Quesnel*.

² "The ministers of Christ baptized not as heart-searchers, as knowing men's sincerity, but as taking their profession for their title to baptism."—*Baxter*.

³ "Non omnes ad Ecclesiam per-

(14) *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John :*

In the beginning of this chapter we are told, that when upon the persecution which arose after the death of Stephen the disciples *were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles, . . . Philip*, one of the seven who were appointed to minister in the distribution of the alms of the Church, *went down to the city of Samaria,¹ and preached Christ unto them ;* and it is then added : *The people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.* To the deacons was given from the first the authority to baptize, but not the power of conferring grace by the laying on of hands ; so that when the Apostles were informed of the success which had attended the preaching of *the word of God in Samaria,²* they resolved to send *unto them Peter and John*, to establish the work which Philip had begun. It was necessary that the Apostles should go in person. Christ had declared that the Twelve should be *His witnesses . . . both in Jerusalem, . . . and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth ;* and now the prediction was in course of being fulfilled. They went, therefore, witnessing to the truth of His words by the gifts of the Holy Ghost—the power of working miracles and of speaking with tongues—as well as by the holiness of their lives, and by their readiness to endure patiently the persecutions which fell on them for the name of Christ.

It was no common news which reached the Apostles as

tinient qui in Ecclesia sunt, nec omnes boni sunt, immò semper major pars malorum : tempore autem messis segregabitur triticeum à zizaniis."—*Ferus.*

¹ "*Sychem or Shechem, in Samaria, was the first place in Canaan where God appeared to Abraham when he came from Haran, and there he built his first altar to the Lord (see vii. 16). It was also the first place to which Jacob went, on his coming from Padan Aram, with his children the Patriarchs ; and there also he built the altar El-Elohe-Israel (Genesis xxxiii. 20). There it was, that two of the twelve Patriarchs, Simeon and Levi, in cruelty and subtlety constrained the inhabitants to communion with the*

literal Israel by circumcision (Gen. xxxiv. 15—30). But now, after that the Holy Ghost has been poured out from heaven upon the Church, *two of the Twelve Apostolic Patriarchs of the spiritual Israel—Peter and John—go down to the same region—perhaps also to the same city—and receive its inhabitants into full communion with the true children of Abraham, or Israel of God, the Christian Church, by the spiritual circumcision of the heart, i. e. by the gift of the Holy Ghost.*"—*Wordsworth.*

² "*Samaria, urbs non regio.*"—*Patritius.* "Σαμάρεια may be the name of the city or the country."—*Hackett.*

Acts viii. 1,
5, 6.

Eusebius.

Acts i. 8.

Hofmeister.

to the readiness of the Samaritans to receive *the word of God*. The narrowness of the national spirit, and the prejudice against anything which proceeded from Jerusalem, made their reception of the Gospel the more remarkable. In this readiness they seem to have discerned the hand of God, and to confirm the new converts *Peter and John* were sent by the Apostolic college. In this the example of our Blessed Lord, who sent out His disciples *two and two*, was followed—a visible token of that concord and brotherly union which He requires from those who serve at His altar and bear His name.¹

Lange.

Luke x. 1.
Hugo de S.
Charo.

Most of the modern commentators of the Roman Church are anxious to explain this passage so as not to impugn the doctrine of the superiority of St. Peter over the rest of the Apostles.² If he were sent by the body of the Apostles, it would seem as though the body which had authority to send must needs be superior in some degree to him who was sent forth. One favourite illustration made use of by such commentators is, that the sending forth of the Son does not imply any inferiority to the Father, by whom He was sent. It is obvious that such an illustration is not applicable to the sending forth of human agents. The words *sending* and *sent*, when used of the actions of the Father and of the Eternal Son, are human words expressing, as nearly as we can express or understand, relations and actions which are beyond our sight and comprehension. This illustration, however, so far as it has any force, would imply that Peter was the equal only of those by whom he was sent forth, and is inconsistent with any claim to superiority, *for the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him*.

E. G. Corn.
à Lap.

John xiii. 18.

(15) *Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.*

Acts ii. 38.

¹ "Cur duo Apostoli mittuntur cum unius huic muneri sufficeret? Samaritæ uniendi erant Judæis, à quibus implacabili schismate diffidebant: Petrus ergo mittitur et cum eo Joannes ut concordet ad concordiam alios vocarent, vocarent ad unitatem."—*Nova-vinus*.

² "Quando noi sentiamo dire, gli Apostoli e il collegio Apostolico mandaron Pietro e Giovanni a' Samaritani, non argomentano per questo che Pietro non fusse il capo e principale di quel

collegio; si come se il gran consiglio di Spagna detirminasse che la persona del Rè andasse ad' una impresa, non seguirebbe per questo che 'l Rè non fusse il capo e principale di quel consiglio e di quel regno."—*Remigio Fiorentino*. Whatever advice the Grand Council of Spain might have given to Charles the Fifth, they would hardly have ventured to send their sovereign on any expedition whatever. Such arguments only betray the anxiety of those who use them.

The Apostles did not give of themselves, since it was not theirs to give; but they *prayed*, in order that they might have wherewith to give to those who needed. What they prayed for was for a larger measure of the gifts of the *Holy Ghost*; the special gifts, it may be; the plenitude and fulness of the sanctifying grace of the Spirit.

Augustine.
Hugo de S.
Chiaro.
Corn. à Lap.

Many understand by these gifts such as are conferred in confirmation; and doubtless the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit were imparted through the laying on of the hands of the Apostles.¹ It would seem, however, that the gifts specially referred to were such as could be seen by those who had not themselves received them. They were such as provoked the envy of Simon *when he saw* the effect of the laying on of the Apostles' hands, and led him to desire the like gifts—miracles, gifts of healing, or of tongues.

Rosenmüller.

Matt. xxviii.
19.
Acts ii. 38;
xi. 48; xx.
2, 5.

(16) *For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

As yet He had *fallen upon none*, that is, not by such external signs as at the first oftentimes, or perhaps generally, witnessed to the gift and presence of the Holy Spirit.² The Samaritan converts had, indeed, received the remission of their sins and had obtained the grace of justification, for these are the gifts received when any are *baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*,³ and this baptism, with its attendant gifts, they had received;⁴ such external gifts, however, as

Lorinus.

Dion. Carth.

¹ "L'excellence du Sacrement de Confirmation est si grande, qu'il est réservé aux Evêques, comme ayant seuls la plénitude du sacerdoce, pour donner la plénitude de la sanctification chrétienne. Sa forme est la prière sacramentale, accompagnée de l'imposition des mains. Son effet est de donner, avec une nouvelle effusion de charité et de force, la personne même du saint Esprit, pour habiter substantiellement dans le cœur, comme dans son temple, et pour le défendre contre les attaques du monde et de l'enfer."—*Quesnel*.

² This outward evidence of the gift of the Spirit is alleged as a reason why in the Primitive Church the Chrism was not used in confirmation. *Gaspar Sanchez*, in *Com. in Act. Apostolorum*, says, "Eo tempore quo externo signo et

visibili forma dabatur S. Spiritus Apostoli non utebantur chrismate ut docet S. Tho. 3 pars, quest. 72, art. 2, ad. 1, quia Spiritus Sanctus visibiliter lapsus satis supplebat significationem olei."

³ "Vocibus εις ὄνομα, non secus ac latinis *in nomine*, significatur id ex quo est virtus baptismi."—*Patritius*.

⁴ Τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.—See Catechism. Conc. Trident. De Baptismo Sacramento, § 16. Moberley's *Sayings of the Great Forty Days* (p. 287, 2nd edit.). "Hoc loco si et tu similiter te facere dicis, quia hæretici non baptizaverunt in Spiritu Sancto: scias Philippum ab Apostolis non fuisse divisum; eandem habuisse Ecclesiam; eundem Dominum Jesum Christum prædicasse; diaconum certè fuisse eorum qui postea manus imposuerunt."—*S. Hieronymus adv. Luciferanos*.

testified to the truth of Christ's religion, and arrested the attention of the world, and were *a sign to them that believe* of God's presence, were not given, since they could only be conferred—at least they were not usually conferred save—by the hands of the Apostles.¹ Peter and John, therefore, came not only to confirm and strengthen the souls of the newly baptized, but also to give these gifts of tongues and the power of working miracles, which were the external signs of the indwelling Spirit.

(17) *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

By the hands of the Apostles were two distinct gifts conferred :—

(1) The grace given in confirmation which some suppose to be specially referred to in these words; that strengthening grace which had been promised by our Blessed Lord to the Apostles, the *power from on high* which they received *after that the Holy Ghost had come upon them*, and which by the laying on of their hands was also bestowed upon the rest of the members of Christ's Church.

(2) The special and extraordinary gifts which at the first were poured out upon the converts, who having received the gift of the remission of their sins in baptism, now received the further gift of working miracles and of speaking with tongues.²

In baptism we are regenerated, in order that we may have spiritual life; in confirmation we are strengthened to resist sin, and to overcome our temptations. These gifts of the Holy Ghost are distinct the one from the other, and are conferred upon us at different times. By the grace of baptism we receive the germ and gift of spiritual life; by that of confirmation we obtain grace for growth in holiness throughout our life.³

Then laid they their hands on them. This action is a deeply significant one.

¹ μόνον δὲ βαπτισμένοι ὑπάρχοντες τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ—"Par-
ticularia tantum restringit Baptismum ut
notat Lyræus, non autem formam,
hoc est, significat Samaritanos tantum
baptizatos fuisse non accepto exteriori
spiritu Sancto; non verò quod baptismi
forma solum continerit Nomen Domini
esu."—*Lorinus*.

² "Accipiebant Spiritum Sanctum

cum plenitudine gratiæ amplioris, com-
mitante etiam signo aliquo et miraculo
visibili."—*Fromond*.

³ "Note, 1. It was at first the emi-
nent privilege of the Apostles that the
Holy Ghost should be given by their
ministry. 2. Imposition of hands,
being an usual act of authoritative
benediction, was used as the sign here-
in. 3. Yet prayer to God must first

It is the outward indication—

(1) Of power conferred, of some gift or benefit bestowed on him upon whom the hand of another is laid. Thus Naaman, when expecting the cure of his leprosy, says, *I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.* But when the ruler came to our Lord in order that He might restore his daughter to life, he says, *Come and lay thy hand on her, and she shall live;* and the promise of Christ to His disciples was, *they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

2 Kings v. 11.

Matt. ix. 18.

Mark xvi. 18.

Numb. xxvii.
22, 23.

Lev. i. 2, 4.
Numb. viii.
12.
Sanchez.

(2) To lay hands on a person is a token that he is appointed to some office, or is devoted to death. Thus when Joshua was to be set aside as the ruler of God's people in the place of Moses, we read, *And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses;* and when the victim was to be set apart and slain for the worship of God, he who offered was especially commanded to lay his hands upon it in token that he so dedicated it. *If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord . . . he shall put his hand upon the head of the offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.*

Novarinus.
[End of
Epistle for
Tuesday in
Whitsun
Week.]

As the hand of the priest was laid upon the sacrifice about to be slain, so now are the hands of the Apostles laid upon the newly-baptized, in token of the death unto sin to which they are called. Thus again, when the hand of the Church is laid on any of us, either in confirmation or in orders, let us remember that we are called to a special ministry, and bidden to die unto the world and to live a life of holiness. Let us also remember that for this end we receive that strength which comes from the death of Christ and from his resurrection to life.¹

prevail for His grant thereof, before the sign was used. 4. The gift of the Holy Ghost was not that which is regenerating and necessary to pardon and satisfaction (else all these baptized persons must be supposed till so long after unpardoned), but it was that extraordinary gift, which was for the first sealing and propagating of the Gospel, of which others could be discerning judges (such as languages, prophecies, healing, miracles, &c.), which they were not of sincere inward

holiness." — *Baxter's Notes on New Testament.*

¹ "O Lord, who didst lay Thy hands on men and children and bless them upon earth, and by the hands of Thy holy Apostles didst convey the Holy Ghost, reach Thy blessing to us from heaven. Give us a right judgment and reverent esteem of this Thy gift; and since no increase will come, though Paul plant and Apollos water — no Spirit will appear for all St. Peter's preaching, or St. Paul's con-

(18) *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,*

Simon saw the effect which followed the *laying on of the Apostles' hands* by the outward signs, it would seem, of the grace and power conferred on the believers; or the gift of this grace was proved to him and to others in some other way which appealed to their senses. He attributed, however, these effects to some magical power which the Apostles possessed, and in order to purchase this power so that he might confer it on others *he offered them money*.¹ It is clear that he did not recognize these signs as any proof of the indwelling of the Spirit, nor did he truly believe in Christ, nor in the faith taught by the Apostles, otherwise he would not have erred as to the source of this power, nor have *offered them money* in order to obtain the like power. It may be that having seen others laying their offerings of money and of possessions at the feet of the Apostles, he might have concluded that they did so in order to buy the grace which was bestowed by the *laying on of the Apostles' hands*.² His heart was filled with the love of self, and he was so blinded by worldly ambition, that he understood not what was passing before his eyes, nor was he able to comprehend those things which had extorted admiration from him. So that though he saw the great works of the Spirit, yet this sight did not lead him to confess Christ. He listened to the truths of the gospel, and was moved

Chrysostom.

Corn. & Lap.

Lechler.

Limborch.

Cyril Jerus.

firming—bless all holy hands and heads who use Thy ordinance, and let Thy Church never want such heads and hands, that we and our children may be grounded in truth and increase in grace. Amen.”—*Dean Brough—Sacred Principles*.

“Mirabilium tuorum, Domine, o-vantes insignia prædicamus, et ideo illapsu illo Sancti Spiritus repleti nos credimus, qui his a te olim fuit in discipulos distributus, cum et ante ascensionem tuam in eorum cordibus indeptus proximi dilectionem, et post e cœlis emissus, tenendam in illis tuam impressit charitatem. Ex hoc te, clementissime Deus, oramus, ut hoc, quod sacramentis figuratum fore cognoscitur, in nostris cordibus impleatur. Quo Spiritu ferventes et spiritualia locupletantes, et proximis connectamur in pace et tua ubertim

ferveamus dulcedine, ut in charitate illa, quæ per Spiritum Sanctum nostris est diffusa in cordibus, firmissime radicati, consolationem promerentes Paracleti, coronari mereamur in adventu judicii tui. Amen.”—*Missale Gothicum*.

¹ “Thus even Simon himself, the arch heretic, supplies a strong argument for the reality of the Divine grace dispensed by prayer and laying on of Apostolic hands. He would never have offered to give money for what did not exist.”—*Wordsworth*.

² “*Quia per impositionem manus Apostolorum* — Non tantum in hoc sacramento, sed etiam in ordinatione Episcoporum, ad 1 Tim. iv. 14, et in ordinatione Presbyterorum, 1 Tim. v. 22, et Diaconorum, Actor. vi. 6, manus imponebantur.”—*Fromond*.

but not changed by them. He wondered at the mighty works wrought through the Apostles, but filled with the passion of ambition and with desires of self-aggrandizement, he sought only to obtain like power in order that he might advance his own influence and reputation.

Calvin.

Lorinus.

Simon had been baptized, but he had not received the confirming grace given by means of the Apostles. As in the deliverance from Egypt many an one was led through the Red Sea and partook of God's mercies in the desert, and yet perished without seeing even the borders of the promised land, so was it with Simon. A lesson to all the baptized children of God, teaching them that no past reception of sacramental grace in baptism will avail to them if, turning away from God, they fall into sin, and become servants of the Evil One.¹

Hofmeister.

Lorinus.

Gen. xxv. 31.
Heb. xiii. 16.
Hugo de S.
Charo.

From this attempt of Simon to purchase the power of conferring spiritual gifts, the sin of trafficking in sacred things and of obtaining the right and position which enables the purchaser to dispense spiritual gifts is called simony.² This sin is that which led to the rejection of Esau, who sold his birthright and with it the spiritual promises made to the firstborn: it made the sin of Balaam, who for reward cursed the people of Israel, and of Gehazi, who procured wealth from Naaman, in gratitude for the cure of his leprosy; and, finally, it was the sin of Judas, who sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver.

Tostatus in
Matt.

Lorinus.

Simony, however, is the sin of procuring spiritual power not merely by means of money, but also by subserviency and flattery.³

¹ "C'est un abus terrible et plus commun qu'on ne pense de vouloir faire servir le saint Esprit à ses passions. Seigneur, purgez votre Eglise de cet abus. Faites moi connoître ce qu'il peut y avoir de caché dans les replis de mon cœur, qui pourrait tendre à un tel dereglement."—*Quesnel*.

² "Offert Simon Simoni *pecuniam*, utique non exigam. Videtur consequenter ambivisse et emere voluisse episcopatum et verisimiliter Samaritanum, ut in ea regione instar Hierarchæ et gloria præcelleret et opibus augeretur. Unde ab hoc Simone quotquot vel episcopatus vel alia beneficia ecclesiastica vel res sacras emunt aut vendunt, *Simoniaci* vocantur, inquit Bellarminus."—*Tirinus*.

³ "Ab hoc Simone simoniæ peccatum denominatum est, cum aliquis vendit vel emit spiritualia, aut spiritualibus

annexa, aliove quovis contractu non gratuito rem spiritualement, alia re pretio æstimabili comparare vel alteri conferre desiderat, illamque his modis qui dicuntur *munere à manu, ab obsequio, à linguâ* compensat."—*Lorinus*.

On *Simony* consult,—*Fleury*, Institution au droit ecclésiastique, 3^{ème} partie, chap. xi. *Lancelott*, Institutiones Juris Canonici, Lib. iv. tit. 3. *Van Espen*, Jus Ecclesiasticum universum, Pars i. tit. 26; Pars ii. cap. 2; et Observationes in Can. Turonenses. *Ricard*, Analysis Conciliorum, Tom. iii. p. 192 (ed. Venetiis, 1776). *Devoti*, Institutiones Canonicae, t. iv. tit. ix. (Bassani, 1834). *Hericourt*, Les Loix ecclésiastiques de France, Pars i. c. 2^{ème} § 16. *Can. et Dec. Con. Trident.* Sess. xxi. c. 1; Sess. xxiv. cap. 14 et 18. *Bingham's Origines Eccles.* Book iv. c. 3, § 14, and Book xvi. c. 6, §§ 28—30.

(19) *Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*

The ambition and self-seeking of Simon, and his utter want of comprehending either the nature or the source of the gift, is shown in the form of his request. He seeks not grace for himself, nor the power to obey the commandments of God, but he asks for power and influence over others.¹ Many such there have been at all periods of the Church's history, who have been ready to seek the office through which the grace is conferred, but who seek not and care not to possess the grace which would enable them to perform the duties of such office.

Sylveira.
Olshausen.

Novarinus.

(20) *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee,² because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

2 Kings v. 16.
Matt. x. 8.
Acts ii. 38;
x. 45; xi.
17.

These words have been understood not as an imprecation, or at least less as an imprecation than as a warning to Simon, and as a prediction of what would befall him if he remained impenitent. This seems its true meaning, since the condemnation was a conditional one, and repentance was pointed out as the means by which the sin might be blotted out.³ It was a malediction against the sin rather than against the sinner, a stigma of the darkest kind affixed to the sin of simony.

Ceumenius.
Fromond.

Humphrey.
Sylveira.

Thy money—that which we will not receive; that which we desire not, though we possess neither *silver* nor *gold*; that which in perishing shall perish with thee, who hast no higher desire nor trust than in perishable riches. *Thy*

Gorranus.
Acts iii. 6.
Alford.

Johnson's Vade Mecum, sub tit. Simony. And his Laws and Canons of the Church of England.—*Godolphin's* Repert. Canonium, p. 535 (ed. 1687); and *Burn's* Eccles. Law, ed. *Philimore*, in index.

¹ "Simon Magus jam fidelis quoniam aliquid adhuc de circundatoria secta cogitaret, ut scilicet ipse inter miracula professionis suæ etiam Spiritum Sanctum per manuum impositionem enundinaret." — *Tertullian* de Idololatr., cap. 9.

² "The expression of Peter, 1 Pet. i. 7, χρυσίου τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου, is remarkably parallel with this (see 1

Pet. i. 18)." — *Alford*.

³ "Pereas tu cum tua pecunia: quod non affectu vindictæ sed æquitatis et justitiæ ab eo dictum est, ait Carthusianus. Aut certe tales Sanctorum imprecationes sic intelligendæ sunt, non ut optent aliis ista mala, sed prophetent eventura, nisi pœnitentiam agant." — *Fromond*.

⁴ "*Pecunia tua*. Non nostra, qui non cupimus, sed tua quam spiritui comparas ut illum pro ea vendas et eam Spiritu emas. Ideo enim Spiritum emere volebat, ut aliis vendens plus pecuniæ acciperet." — *Hugo de S. Charo*.

sordidness is shown in this, that *thou hast thought that the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, the great gift, emphatically the gift of God, may be purchased with money.*

Corn. & Lap.

Not for man's labour, not for man's desert, is the gift given; all grace from God, including ministerial power to be exercised in God's Church, comes as a free gift to man from God.

Arias Mont.

(21) *Thou hast neither part nor lot¹ in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*

Thou hast neither part, no disposition of heart, no purity of desire, nor lot, not that which is given to those whose hearts are right and as a gift from above.² Thou art not a partaker of the grace, and therefore cannot share in the lot of those to whom that grace is given. Thou hast neither inward grace nor outward call; for the Holy Spirit dwells not in the heart of the hypocrite and deceitful, nor in those who seek the offices of the Church for the purposes of ambition and avarice.³

Sanchez.

Fromond.

Huré.

Arias Mont.

It does not follow from these words, *thou hast no part nor lot in this matter*, no share in the blessings promised by Christ, that Simon had received baptism in hypocrisy. He might have been sincere at that time under the influence of the mighty works wrought by Philip, and his *heart* may afterwards have departed from the right way, and may thus have become displeasing to God. His fall may have arisen from a lack of earnestness, not from any defect of faith at the moment when he received baptism.

Lorinus.

Dan. iv. 27.
2 Tim. ii. 25.

(22) *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps (ἐἰ ἄρα)⁴ the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

¹ κληρος—"not without reference perhaps to the κληρονομία of the kingdom of God, the κληρονομία ἀφθαρτος, 1 Pet. i. 4."—*Alford*.

² "Cajetanus dicit partem sumi pro re debita, sortem verò pro eo, quod desuper contingit: neque id displicet."—*Sanchez*.

³ "Il faut deux choses pour avoir part au ministère Ecclesiastique, une sainteté qui en rende digne, et une vocation de Dieu par laquelle on y soit engagé."—*Huré*.

"Deux conditions sont nécessaires pour une entrée légitime; la piété qui y dispose, et la volonté de Dieu qui y appelle gratuitement et comme par sort."—*Quesnel*.

⁴ "τὸ fortè non est dubitantis sed potiùs expletiva confirmantis particula: græcè enim est ἄρα, quod non tantùm fortè, sed et utique, sanè; profectò significat, estque sæpe expletiva particula apud Homerum, ut notat Gaza l. 2, Grammat."—*Corn. à Lapide*. "Omnino ἰὶ ἄρα reddendum est ut, non ut vulgo,

Repent therefore, and with so sincere a repentance that the forgiveness which is given to all who really repent may be extended to thee. The teaching of the gospel does not end in pointing out the evil of sin and denouncing it, it points also to the remedy, and calls upon the sinner so to repent that he may obtain forgiveness at the hand of God. These two—penitence and prayer—are still the resources of, even the greatest sinner.

Patritius.

Ferus.

Queanel.

It has been asked why the sin of Simon, which was analogous to that of Ananias and Sapphira, did not meet with a like instantaneous punishment. This is to overlook the fact that his sin differed from that of those sinners, in that he made confession of it when rebuked by Peter. It has, however, been pointed out that in the economy of God's dealings with man, punishment is inflicted on the first sinner, on one who commits some new or unwonted offence, as a warning to all who would otherwise offend, and as an example of the wrath of God against the special sin which is thus punished. Thus when the man gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day, in the face of the newly promulgated law, he was punished with death, not that all after offenders should suffer in the like manner, but that all should learn by his example how God will visit those who shall break his commandments. Thus he punished Ananias for his sin against the Holy Ghost as a warning to Simon and others of the after fate which awaits those who may sin in like manner.

Salmeron.

Num. xv. 32.

De Saci.

We have in this part of the history of Simon the following truths:—

(1) That *thought* even before it has proceeded to action can be sinful and need forgiveness.¹

(2) That repentance is available even to those who fall into great and deadly sin after baptism.

(3) That Divine grace given in baptism when dormant through sin may be quickened by repentance.

(4) The possibility and the duty of prayer and repentance to those who after baptism fall into deadly sin.

Wordsworth.

The chief of the apostles could prescribe repentance to the sinner: he could not give his assurance that he would be forgiven, since he could not be certain of the reality of his

at fortè, si fortè quod ab oratione et cohortatione Petri plane alienum est."

—Rosenmüller. "Some idea like, and thus see if, appears to lie between the imperative and the indicative future. See Winer, § 41."—Hackett.

¹ "ἰνύουα, consideratio, Syriacè

habetur נכלא *nechla*, id est, *dolus*. Græca vox significat commentum et cogitationem solertem."—Lorinus. See Chilcote on Evil Thoughts; and Archbishop Sharp's Sermon on the Government of the Thoughts (Works, vol. i. 350, ed. Ox. 1829).

repentance. It is a strange temerity for any one to presume beyond the Apostle.

Quesnel.

Heb. xii. 15.

(23) *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*

Fromond.

The gall of bitterness, or the greatest of all bitterness.

The Hebrews thus put two words together to indicate the full extent of a thing, by this way expressing the superlative degree. Here it expresses a state of desperate sin and impenitence. Sin is spoken of as *gall* and as *bitterness* with reference, as it would seem, to the words of Moses in which he speaks of apostasy from God as *a root that beareth gall and wormwood*.¹ In the same spirit, and using the same image, St. Paul bids Christians to look *diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God: lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble them, and thereby many be defiled.* The warning is a twofold one:—

Leigh.

Hammond.
Deut. xxix.
18.

Heb. xii. 15.

springing up trouble them, and thereby many be defiled. The warning is a twofold one:—

(1) As *gall* makes all food bitter, so does avarice and ambition, especially with reference to the things of God, taint and deprave even Christian virtues.

Limborch.

(2) As the root of evil, or of bitterness, spreads evil around, so the man who conceives sin within his heart, and retains it there, becomes a root and source of evil to all around.

Kuinoel.

In the use of this word *gall* there may perhaps be a reference to the colour of *gall* as resembling honey, though its effects are so dissimilar. Thus sinful pleasures may be pleasing as honey when first tasted, but in the end they will be as *gall* in their bitterness,² and as destructive as a poisonous root, for sin is both:—

Sylveira.
Lorinus.

Ezek. xviii.
20.

(1) It destroys the soul itself, for *the soul that sinneth it shall die.*

(2) It is noxious, offensive and hateful to God and man, as *gall* is to the taste.³

Corn. & Lap.

¹ "The Hebrew גַּחַל which we render *gall* signifies also a poisonous herb, and so must signify in Deut. xxix. 18, where it is joined to a root bearing or bringing forth; and so the wormwood following will best agree with it, and both together will express that sin to be a root whose effects are poisonous and bitter, very hurtful and infectious to men, and most displeasing to God. Answerable and equivalent to this is the χολή πικρία here."—Hammond.

² "Fel colore simile est mellis, sapore valde dissimile, multum amarum et acerbum, sic et peccatum in apparentia videtur habere quandam speciem dulcedinis, intus omne amarum et acerbum, virtus è contra etsi in aspectu videatur aspera, intus verò et gustatu valde dulcis et suavis."—Sylveira.

³ "Hujus rei symbolo Judæi fellei, Christo in cruce propinarunt fel et myrrham, Matt. xxvii. 31. Peccator ergo habet cor felleum; id est, pessimè

But St. Peter adds that Simon was *in the bond of iniquity*—sin being represented as a chain from which the sinner needs to be released. The sinner, especially the habitual sinner, is a slave to the sin in which he indulges. Satan is his taskmaster: his sin the chain which fetters his free will: his conscience a very prison-house from which he cannot be released, save by the power of Christ the deliverer. No yoke so burdensome, indeed, no bond so rigid, as a sinful habit, no prison-house so difficult to break away from as a reproaching conscience. For this end was Christ crucified, that our old sin *might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*. For this end He came to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and . . . to break every yoke.

In these two images, that of *gall* and of *bonds*,¹ we are taught how great and far-extending the consequences of avarice and self-seeking are; they taint that which otherwise would be pure, they seize hold of and enslave the heart, and render feeble the will of man. They are *gall* and *bitterness* to the sinner, and to others whom they corrupt, so long as the man is fast bound in the chain of sin.²

(24) *Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.*

Simon here, unlike Ananias, makes confession of his sin, though he does not advance beyond confession, there was nothing in his after-conduct which indicated that he had even entered upon the work of amendment. Characteristically of such imperfect repentance, he seems to fear chiefly the punishment which the Apostle denounces against avarice. His prayer is, not that they should ask forgiveness for his sin; not that his heart might be made right in the sight of God; not that he may be strengthened sincerely to repent; but only that the threatened evil might not fall

affectum erga Deum, erga legem, erga virtutem et honestatem: hæc enim omnia odit.”—*Corn. à Lapide*.

¹ “The word *σύνδεσμος* signifies in the Septuagint of the Old Testament *treason*, 2 Kings xi. 15, xii. 20; and Jerem. xi. 9, a *conspiracy*, *league* or *covenant*, and by it the Hebrew קשר is rendered Jer. xi. 9, where Symmachus reads *συνωμοσία*, *conspiracy*. The Hebrew רִצְצוּת which, Isa. lviii. 6,

is rendered *σύνδεσμος*, is, saith *David de Pomis*, equivalent to קשר, and so signifies a binding together of minds; and both there and here with *ἀδικίας*, unrighteousness, added to it, denotes a most unrighteous, impious treason or treachery.”—*Hammond*.

² “*Dulcia peccatorum initia, extrema amara, ut ferè dulcia omnia in amarorem et bilem facilè commutantur.*”—*Lorinus*.

Olshausen.

Quessnel.

Beza.

Rom. vi. 6.

Isa. lviii. 6.

Hofmeister.

Gen. xx. 7, 17.

Ex. viii. 8.

Num. xxi. 7.

1 Kings xiii.

Job xlii. 8.

James v. 16.

(Ecumenius.

Corn. & Lap.

Hofmeister. upon him. This is not to hate sin, but only to dread justice.¹

We read not that Simon himself prayed even for deliverance from the threatened punishment. He does but ask others to pray. Nothing is more common than for the sinner to remit to others in one way or another the work of repentance, and to expect a benefit from the prayer which he does not himself offer up. Yet what more futile than to expect a blessing from such vicarious repentance.

Quesnel.

(25) *And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.*

They testified and preached by words and by miracles; that is, they declared *the word of the Lord*—and returning to Jerusalem, where the Apostles were yet bidden to remain, on their way they confirmed and strengthened the believers in Samaria against the false teaching and the pretensions of Simon.² God by the miracles wrought through the instrumentality of Peter and John setting His seal to their work and giving them this encouragement, in permitting them to see the fruit of their labours.

Fromond.

Bengel.

Lorinus.

Quesnel.

Luke ix. 54.

The same John who had once asked that *fire might come down from heaven* and destroy the Samaritans because they received not Christ, now preached the gospel of peace in many villages of the Samaritans. This gospel he had learned in the school of Christ, by whom he was rebuked for his intemperate zeal. Then he knew *not what manner of spirit* he was of, now he was moved and guided by the Holy Spirit, and laboured to kindle in the hearts of the people of Samaria a fire not to consume, but to purify and enlighten them.

Glaug.

(26) *And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

¹ "Metu territus potius quam facti pœnitentia ductus."—*Erasmus*. "Qui solius pœnæ metu à vitiis se abstinere non detestatur scelera sed odit justitiam."—*Hofmeister*.

² "ὑπιστρέφον, ἐνγγελιζοντο—were returning, were preaching the gospel. So A. B. D., and with reference to the last word C. E. also. This is the reading of Lachmann, Meyer, Tischendorf,

Wordsworth, and Alford. It is also that of the Vulgate. The imperfections of the verbs, which are here employed instead of the aorists, imply that the Apostles devoted some time to the publication of the gospel. They did not immediately return to Jerusalem, but employed themselves in preaching the gospel throughout the region of Samaria.

The narrative of St. Luke now turns to the actions of one man, and he not an apostle, the deacon Philip, who was selected as the honoured instrument of making known God's truth, both to the people of Samaria, and also to Ethiopia, through the baptism of the Eunuch. It is not of villages instructed, or of the gospel made known to a city, that the Evangelist speaks, but of the conversion of one man. The omniscience of God regards not a nation and a multitude only, but also every single soul in that nation and multitude. Here we have the grain of mustard seed which was to bear fruit in an abundant harvest in Ethiopia and Egypt, the preparation for the ingathering of the Gentiles.

Calvin.

The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, whether with an outward appearance, or by inward voice, we are not told, and his command, *Arise*, implies the urgency of the work to which he was called, and the alacrity and haste which was required of him.

Dion. Carth.

Lorinus.

A doubt has existed from early times, whether the words *which is desert* apply to the town Gaza, or to *the way that goeth down* to it. If of the city, we are told by Strabo that it was *desert*, that it had never recovered from its destruction under Alexander the Great, and it is added, that the new city which had risen after this destruction was built on another site, nearer to the sea-coast, and therefore lay off the road from Jerusalem to Egypt, formerly passing through Gaza, and much frequented, but now deserted through the destruction of the city. If the words apply to the city, there may be a reference to the fact which Arrian notes, that Gaza was the beginning of the desert, or the nearest point to the Egyptian desert. The words, however, are more usually held to mean that the road itself was a *desert* one, either as unfrequented or, which accounts for its being unfrequented, because there were no towns and villages along it.¹ In the

Lightfoot.

Lienard.

Kuinoel.

Chrysostom.

¹ It is now generally agreed that these words relate to the road, not to the city. "The meaning is, not that Gaza was desert, but that as one went southward over the road from Jerusalem to Gaza it was desert and solitary" (*Ritter's Comparative Geography of Palestine*, vol. iii. p. 211, Eng. trans.). "There were several ways leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. The most frequented at the present day, although the longest, is the way by Ramleh. Anciently there appears to have been two more direct roads; one down the great Wady el Surar by Beth-Shemesh,

and then passing near Tel-es-safieh; the other through Wady el-Musurr to Betogabra or Eleutheropolis, and therein Gaza, though a more southern tract" (*Dr. Robinson's Biblical Researches*, vol. ii. p. 640). "Another route still proceeded by the way of Bethlehem and Bethzur to Hebron, and then turned across the place to Gaza. It passed through the southern part of Judæa, and hence through a region actually called "the desert" in Luke i. 80. This description would apply no doubt to some part of any one of the roads in question. The Hebrews

De Dieu.

Fromond.

Patritius.

Lechler.

Zeph. iii. 10.
John xii. 20.

Syriac version, made at a time when the meaning of these words would be understood, the passage is translated "the desert way." If indeed, as history tells us, Gaza had been destroyed, and that it had not recovered its former prosperity in trade, then naturally the road which passed through it would be neglected, and, as soon happens in those countries, would become *desert*. As there were at least two roads leading from Jerusalem to Gaza, the frequented one passing through Hebron, the other, and shorter one, not passing through any considerable village, there was a necessity that the angel by whom the command *arise* was given should indicate the road where Philip was to join himself to the Eunuch. The words, therefore, *which is desert*, would naturally be those of the angel and not added, as some have conjectured, by St. Luke.

(27) *And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians,¹ who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,* (28) *Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

Hofmeister.

And he arose and went. In these words the unhesitating obedience of Philip to the command of God is evidenced. He was sent out not knowing on what errand he is sent, and he *arose and went* immediately.

Behold—is used in Holy Scripture when some new or

termed any tract "a desert" which was thinly inhabited or unfitted for tillage" (*Hackett's Commentary*). *Alford* remarks, "There could be no possible reason for adding such a specification as *ἐρημος* to the city Gaza, seeing that Gaza had nothing to do with the object of the journey, and the road would be designated the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, whether the latter city were inhabited or in ruins."

¹ As Pharaoh among the ancient Egyptians, and Ptolemy in more recent times, and Cæsar among the Romans, so Candace was the customary name of the queens among the Ethiopians in Upper Egypt. "It is evident, both from Strabo (lib. xvii.) and Dio (lib. liv.) that there was a queen of that name in Ethiopia, who fought against

the Romans about the twenty-second or twenty-third year of the reign of Augustus Cæsar, reckoning it from the death of his uncle Julius. It is clear, also, from Pliny (Hist. Nat. lib. vi. c. 29), who flourished in the reign of the Emperor Vespasian, that there was a queen of Ethiopia named Candace in his time; and he adds that this had been the name of their queens now for many years [regnare fœminam Candacem, quod nomen multis jam annis ad reginas transiit]. It is beyond all doubt, therefore, that there was a queen of Ethiopia of this name at the time when Philip is said to have converted the Eunuch. Eusebius tells us that this country continued to be governed by women even to his time." —*Biscoe on the Acts*, chap. iii. § 7.

greatly important event is noticed. Here what follows is the reception of the first-fruits of Ethiopia—the Evangelist probably of Ethiopia—into the fold of Christ.¹ Some doubt has been expressed whether the word *eunuch* here implies that he was mutilated. It does not necessarily follow, the word itself only designates his office, but as in this office formerly, as now, mutilated persons were employed, the word has come to express this condition. Some have supported the view that this man was not so mutilated, because such were rejected from the temple, whither this man had been, but it is doubtful whether at any time these were so rigidly rejected. The promise had been made that God would give even to such a place in His house, and though this promise was only now about to be fulfilled in that Church which was not after the flesh, yet there seem to have been anticipations of this even in the older Church.² Be that as it may, there is another prophecy strikingly fulfilled by the baptism of the Ethiopian, that in the Psalms, where we read, *Princes shall come out of Egypt: Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God*. Here it is predicted:—

(1) That Ethiopia *shall stretch out her hands unto God*—shall join hands with Him, be at one with Him, and be included in the covenant.

(2) That it shall *soon* do so—shall hasten, that is, so to do, and in its eagerness shall outrun and anticipate others, as Ethiopia did in the person of this Proselyte.³

Some have thought that this man was a Jew, many of whom had settled in, or had relations of commerce with, Ethiopia. This, however, seems hardly likely, as then he

Lorinus.

Jer. xxxviii.
7—13;
xxxix. 10—
18.

Isa. lvi. —5.

Baumgarten.

Pr. lxviii. 31.

Sylveira.

Corn. à Lap.

Patritius.

¹ The ancients sometimes comprehended all Africa south of Egypt under the name Ethiopia. In a more restricted sense it comprises the tract of country bounded on the north by Egypt, on the west by Libya, on the east by the Red Sea, and on the south by unexplored Africa. It included Nubia, Cordofan, and Abyssinia, which had for its religious and commercial capital the island of Merôë, formed by the bifurcation of the Nile. The name Ethiopia is sometimes limited to this island. It is uncertain in which of these latter meanings the name is here used.

² "Ευνοῦχος, proprie ἐννῆν ἔχων, lectum vel cubiculum custodiens; deinde *eviratus*, quia plerumque evirati reginis huic ministerio adhibebantur. Sæpe est nomen dignitatis, ministerium

regium in genere denotans, Hebr. כְּרִיִּים. Talis olim Potiphar fuerat, qui εὐνοῦχος dicitur, quanquam in matrimonio vixit Gen. xxxvii. 56; xxxix. 1. Hoc etiam loco εὐνοῦχος est *minister regius, Staatsbedienter*."—Rosenmüller.

In the Syriac version the term used for Eunuch is *Mahaimna*, a faithful or confidential minister. See *De Dieu in loco*.

³ "Hic adimpletum est illud Psal. lxvii. 32, *Æthiopia præveniet manus ejus Deo* [Vulg.]: *præveniet*, id est, prima veniet, prima extendet, *manus ejus*, id est, suas (ut patet ex Hebræo) *Deo*, scilicet ad fidem, obedientiam, fœdus et munera ei offerenda. Unde S. Hieron. vertit, *Æthiopia festinet dare manus Deo*, Pagnin., *currere faciet manus suas Deo*."—Corn. à Lapide.

could not be called properly a *man of Ethiopia*, and if a Jew, he would have known that the passage which Philip explained to him was meant of the Messiah.

So devout and earnest is this man represented in his religious duties, that he had come from the uttermost parts of the earth, from the southern extremity of Egypt, to worship God in His temple; so eager in gaining Divine knowledge, that he employed the time of his journey in reading God's word; and if when travelling he was thus assiduous in reading the Scriptures, we may gather what his practice was when at home. By him the command seems literally fulfilled, *These words which I command thee . . . shall be in thy heart, and thou . . . shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*¹

Almost always when in the New Testament a witness to Christ is drawn from the pages of the Old it is taken from the writings of Isaiah, who because of the testimony which he renders to Christ has been called the Evangelical prophet.

A question has been raised as to how a *man of Ethiopia* could read the Hebrew Scriptures. This is to overlook the fact that it is clear he was reading the Greek version of the Old Testament, so that all speculation as to the utility of reading the Scriptures, or of joining in the services of the Church in a language not comprehended by the worshipper, are out of place here.² The eunuch understood these words, he failed, however, to see their application to Christ.

(29) *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, but whether by internal inspiration, as some understand, or, as others, by a visible and corporal appearance as of an angel, in which the command was given, is not told us.³

¹ "Religiosus quippe qui scripturarum studiosus esset et adoraturus Jerusalem venisset. Hujus igitur misertus Dominus, doctorem misit ad eum qui et credenda et agenda doceret: sicut infra de Cornelio, quia uterque quod suum erat curabat, et ad veram se religionem disponebat."—*Gangæus*.

² "Legensque Isaiam prophetam. Sicut erat edoctus a Judæis, sicut et multi laici ex devotione dicunt horas canonicas in latino quamvis non in-

telligent."—*Lyra*.

³ "Spiritus Sanctus per internam inspirationem et locutionem. Ita Beda, Hugo, et Dionys. licet Cajetan et noster Lorinus acceperint angelum. Hic enim vocatur Spiritus Domini, v. 39."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

"Sentit Salmeron *Spiritum* (τὸ πνεῦμα) qui hic dicitur, eundem esse cum eo qui supra (v. 26) vocatus erat *Angelus Domini*."—*Beelen*.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Salmeron.

Deut. vi. 6, 7.

Glossa Ordin.

Sylveira.

Beda. Hugo
de S. Charo.
Dion. Carth.

Cajetan.

Lorinus.

Philip seems not to have been told why he should go to the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza, nor why he was to go to the *desert* road rather than to the more frequented one. When, however, he had obeyed the command of God, and had reached the place marked out for him by *the angel of the Lord*, then was the reason made evident to him. Fidelity in obeying leads to further trust. Thus does God deal with His servants. He bade Abraham go forth from his country and his kindred, and he *obeyed and he went out, not knowing whither he went*, and in reward for his obedience God led him into the promised land. He bade Samuel to fill his horn with oil and to go to Bethlehem, and only when he was there did He make known to him whom he was to anoint. So, again, when Christ was on the earth and He healed the lepers, He sent them unhealed to the priest, and whilst in obedience to His command they were going, *as they went they were cleansed*. Let us learn from this, that they who unhesitatingly do God's command, to them does He reveal His will the more fully.

Lorinus.

Gen. xii. 1.

Heb. xi. 8.

1 Sam. xvi. 1.

Luke xvii. 14.

Hofmeister.

(30) *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*¹

The word used for *read* in the former verse—*ἀναγίνωσκεν*, and again here, *ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος*—properly means to read aloud. It is still the custom of Orientals when reading—even on a journey—to read aloud.² Amongst the Jews, it was not only the practice to read on a journey, there was a special direction that they should employ themselves in doing so.

Grotius.

Jowett's
Christ.
Researches.
Renan, Les
Apôtres.

He who was so engaged, losing no time, but on his journey even occupied with the reading of God's word, was in God's way for receiving his mercy.

Baxter.

(31) *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

How can I? The Ethiopian, though he understood the language of the prophet, did not understand his meaning. He

Sylveira.

¹ "Particula *ἄρα*, num, in purificatione ibi ferè usurpatur, ubi responsio expectatur negans id, de quo erat interrogatum. Vide Winerum, § 14, 2, et Hermannum ad Vigerum, p. 23."—*Beelen*.

² "Erubin fol. 54, 1; Sota fol. 46, 2,

dixit R. Jehohschua fil. Levi: qui in itinere constitutus est, neque comitem habet, is studeat in lege."—*Schoettgen, Hor. Heb. in loco*.

"Il lisit la Bible à haute voix, selon un usage alors assez répandu."—*Renan*.

seeing doubtless by the garb, and understanding by the earnest question of Philip, that he was a teacher, in his desire for instruction disregarded the lowliness of his station, and bids him *come up* into his chariot *and sit with him*.

De Saci.

The difficulty of understanding the full meaning of Holy Scripture is, then, no sufficient reason why we should neglect the reading it.¹ It is, indeed, both for the soul and the intellect of man, necessary to all, even to the unlearned; though the full manifestation of its meaning, the comparing spiritual truths with spiritual, the comprehension of its hidden meaning, and the refutation of the false meanings affixed to it, still require the aid of the learned in Scripture, and the assistance of those to whom God has made known more of His revealed will than the mass of readers have reached to.²

Quesnel.

Cocceius.

How can I? we must remember is here said, not of our Scriptures, but of a prophecy, part of which was as yet to be fulfilled, and of a passage in His word confessedly still difficult of interpretation.

Limborch.

Is. lili. 7, 8.

(32) *The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not his mouth:* (33) *In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth.*

The difficulty even at the present time of interpreting this passage is a sufficient explanation of the answer of the Ethiopian to the question of Philip whether he understood its meaning, *How can I, except some man shall guide me?*

The prophet is representing the humiliation and sufferings of the Messiah. Not the virtue of humility, of which He was yet the all-perfect example, but of the condition of His humiliation, that He had taken our humanity, that He had voluntarily submitted to the abasement of His glory, and had condescended to the tribulations which surrounded His Incarnate life. As to the remainder of the verse, the two interpretations are both true in themselves, and have the

Fromond.

¹ "L'obscurité de l'Ecriture n'est pas une raison pour se dispenser de la lire."—*Huré*.

² "Qui suæ salutis et perfectionis sequè ac divinæ inspirationis et gratiæ est avidus, sequatur et exequatur hoc S. Basilii, imò Spiritus Sancti, placitum: 'Lectioni piæ succedat oratio,

orationi lectio.' Et illud S. Aug. Serm. 112 de Tempore: 'Qui vult cum Deo semper esse, frequenter debet orare et legere. Nam cùm oramus ipsi cum Deo loquimur: cùm verò legimus, Deus nobiscum loquitur.'—*Corn. d. Lapide*.

support of such great names, that it will be best to state them without doing more than indicating that which I prefer. One interpretation, then, is this. In His lowly estate He, though innocent, was condemned to death, justice was taken from Him, yet *who shall declare His generation*, the number without number of those whom He has redeemed and who are called by His name, for of the increase of His kingdom and the number of His followers there is no end, and that because *His life is taken from the earth*, according to His own prediction, *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me*.¹ Another interpretation is—In His humiliation He was contemned and justice was perverted. His judgment, however, the sentence passed by Pilate, was reversed and *taken away* by His glorious resurrection on the third day—who, then, shall declare the wickedness of the men of *His generation* in condemning the Lord of all life to a shameful death, by which *His life was taken from the earth*. This latter interpretation appears forced. I should myself prefer to read it thus: In His life of humiliation on earth He received not justice from His creatures, and was condemned to death, yet He who was so lowly and was so evil entreated of men was and is of so ineffable a generation, that no tongue can declare it, and this was attested by His resurrection and by His being *taken from the earth*. *His generation* is ineffable. This is true of His Divine, His human, and His spiritual nature²—

(1) His Divine nature, for it is incomprehensible. It is eternal, for *in the beginning was the Word*. John i. 1.

(2) His human nature conceived by the Holy Ghost is beyond the reach of man to declare.

(3) His spiritual generation, the multitude of the faithful, who are all members of His body, are in number as the sand by the sea-side, and are only known to God: and all these are brought into that one body by virtue of His death, and justified by His resurrection. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it becometh alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. For*

“For He was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people, whose the punishment.” Isaiah liii. 8, rather, *was he punished* [p. 223.] The reason is here stated why the servant of God receives so glorious a reward; why, after He has been removed to God, a generation so infinitely great is granted to Him. He has deserved this reward by His having suffered for the sins of His people,

as their substitute.”—Hengstenberg's *Christology of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. p. 291.

² *Generationem ejus quis enarrabit—*“Qui peut comprendre sa naissance éternelle dans le sein de son Père; sa naissance divine dans la bassesse de notre chair; sa naissance glorieuse des tendres du tombeau; sa naissance sacramentale sur nos autels; sa naissance spirituelle dans les âmes?”—*Quesnel*.

Chrysostom.
Cyril.
Tertullian.

Lyra.
Ferus.
Hengstenberg.

John xii. 32.
Dion. Carth.
Sa.

Jerome.
Hugo.
Fromond.
Dion. Carth.
Lightfoot.
Hammond.
Whitby.
Rosenmüller.

Dion. Carth.
Ferus.
Patritius.

John xii. 24.

*He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*¹

Rom. iv. 25.

(34) *And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? himself, or of some other man?*

We have in these words a proof of the earnestness of the eunuch in his inquiries, and his readiness to be instructed in the way of salvation. His patience and his humility in receiving instructions from this way-faring man indicate a temper of mind which is naturally receptive of spiritual truth. Thus is it ever that *God resisteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

Sylveira.
James iv. 6.
1 Pet. v. 5.

Luke xxiv. 27.
Acts xviii. 28.

(35) *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began to preach unto him Jesus.*

He opened his mouth. These words are generally used in Holy Scripture to imply the gravity of what follows, and that the discourse is one which demands attention. Philip unfolded to the eunuch the meaning of this wondrous prophecy, in which Isaiah had foretold such great truths respecting Christ. This was to preach Jesus. For this prophecy declares His incarnation and life of humiliation: His death contrary to justice: His resurrection, by which the unjust sentence was reversed: His ascension to the right hand of power, and the future rule and judgment which He shall exercise over mankind. It thus comprehends the great essential truths of Christianity. These Philip explained, and these were accepted by the eunuch.

Sylveira.

Chrysostom.

Acts x. 47.

(36) *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water:² and the eunuch said, See*

¹ "Postquam mortuus fuerit, adeoque vitam suam pro expiatorio dederit, nec hoc tantum, sed quando resurrexerit ad cœlum ascenderit, ad dextram Patris sederit, atque hoc modo vita ejus corporalis sive præsentia et conversatio visibilis à terrâ fuerit sublata, Deus bone! quantum seminis spiritualis possidebit. Tunc implebitur dictum Ps. cx. Ros juventutis tuæ (tibi addictæ) videbitur quasi ex utero auroræ provenire, quem Sol cœlestis attrahens nebulas cordis humani suo influxu et Spiritus sui instillatione in

rorem convertet: tanta, inquam, erit multitudo subditorum ejus ut neminem illam enumerare possit."—*Jo. Michaelis*

² "As the road on which the eunuch journeyed is unknown, it cannot be ascertained where he was baptized. It may interest the reader to state some of the conjectures. Eusebius and Jerome concur in saying that it took place at Bethzur (Josh. xv. 58; Neh. iii. 16), near Hebron, about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. The site has been identified, bearing still the ancient name. The water there at present

ere is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
 (37) *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine*
heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I
believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Matt. xvi. 16;
 xxviii. 19.
 Mark xvi. 16.
 John vi. 69;
 ix. 35, 38;
 xi. 27.
 Acts ix. 20.
 1 John iv. 15;
 v. 5, 13.

Though the ardour of the eunuch is shown in the suggestion *See, here is water*, yet at the same time we see the signs of his humility. He does not declare his readiness for baptism, still less his fitness. He does not even ask for baptism, he leaves it to Philip to declare whether there be any hindrances which should prevent his baptism.¹

The next verse is wanting in almost all manuscripts, and is now commonly rejected by critics. The difficulty, however, attending its rejection is this, that though wanting in the manuscripts, it is found in several ancient versions and in ecclesiastical writers far older than any existing manuscript. Thus Irenæus quotes it without any question as to its genuineness,² and it was known and recognized by St. Cyprian and Pacian. The reason which is conjectured for its insertion is, that the practice of requiring a confession of faith before baptism suggested that there was some omission here, and that this led to the insertion of the thirty-seventh verse. This is, however, only supposition, and an equally plausible supposition might account for its absence.³

De Saci.

Chrysostom.

Serm. de
 bapt., § 6.
 Patritius.

(38) *And he commanded the chariot to stand still:*
and they went down both into the water, both Philip
and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

They went down both—this does not necessarily imply immersion, but descent into the channel of the stream, the

issues from a perennial source, a part of which runs to waste in the neighbouring fields, and a part is collected into a drinking trough on one side of the road, and into two small tanks on the other side. It was formerly objected that no chariot could have passed here on account of the broken texture of the ground; but travellers have now discovered the traces of a paved road, and the marks of wheels on the stones. See *Ritter's Erdkunde*, xvi. p. 266, and *Wilson's Lands of the Bible*, i. p. 381.—*Hackett*.

¹ "Quasi diceret, ait glossa inter-
 prearis, 'Fides plena est, aqua propè,

baptizator præsens.'"—*Lorinus*.

² "Hunc esse Jesum et impletam in Eo esse scripturam, quemadmodum ipse eunuchus credens et statim postulans baptizari dicebat *Credo Filium Dei esse Iesum*."—*Irenæus*, lib. iii. c. 12, § 8.

³ "The interpolation is very ancient, for in the time of Augustus it was quoted by some as an authority for abbreviating the profession of faith made at baptism. He refutes their argument without disputing the genuineness of their quotation (*De Fide et Op. cix.*)."—*Humphrey*.

Sylveira.

place of baptism. It, however, possibly implies that the eunuch was immersed. Here the Ethiopian indeed changed his skin, and was made white in the water of baptism.¹

Jer. xiii. 23.

Whilst seeking out the meaning of the words he was reading he found Him of whom the prophet spake, and whom unknowingly his soul sought. He found not water only, but a fountain open for sin and uncleanness, and found it not in the temple whither he had gone up, but in the wilderness.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

1 Kings xviii.

12.

2 Kings ii. 16.

Ezek. iii. 12,

14.

(39) *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, so that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

Salmeron.

The going down of the eunuch into the water is a type of his own humility; his ascent out of the water is an emblem of the resurrection of his soul by means of baptism.

Lorinus.

Corn. à Lap.

Sanchez.

1 Kings xviii.

12.

The *Spirit of the Lord*—a spirit, that is, from the Lord, an angel, the same probably by whom Philip was at first sent—he was *caught away* by some supernatural means.

Chrysostom.

sign to the eunuch that the message and the baptism from the hand of Philip were the message and the work of God, who thus removed his servant when that message was delivered, and that work accomplished. Ecumenius says that the eunuch desired Philip to accompany him, and go with him into Ethiopia. God, however, had other work for the Evangelist to do. It may be that He removed the human instrument, as He so often does, lest the admiration and reverence of the newly converted should be centred on man in place of being directed to God.

Whitby.

The eunuch *went on his way rejoicing* because of the greatness of the gift conferred on him and on the whole human race in the redemption of the world by His Son Jesus Christ. *He went on his way rejoicing.* For the sense of pardon and the knowledge of God brings peace to the conscience and joy to the heart of man.³

Fromond.

Ferus.

¹ "The preposition in *κατέβησαν*, may refer to the descent from the higher ground to the water, or to the entrance into the water; but not to the descent from the chariot, for the verb corresponds to *ἀνέβησαν* in v. 39, *they went up*, whereas the eunuch only returned to the chariot."—*Hackett*.

² "Observe qualis descenderit eunuchus, Æthiops, alienigena, nunc post

acceptum baptismam, nihil horum esse sed nova creatura."—*Ferus*.

³ "According to tradition, the name of the eunuch was Judieh, and he is said to have preached the gospel in Ethiopia, though on this history is silent; we know, however, that Christianity was introduced very early in that country, and we have no trustworthy record of who was the first

(40) *But Philip was found at Azotus : and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.*

The road from Gaza led through the land of the former inhabitants, the Philistines, and past the cities of Ekron, Lydda, Joppa, and the plain of Sharon, which are mentioned in the next chapter. Cook.

The servant of Christ, like his Master, rests not from his labours. As one miracle of healing was but to our Lord the occasion of a new work of mercy, so no sooner had Philip baptized the eunuch than, gathering fresh strength from this work of his ministry, he goes on to labour for others, and to make known the gospel in other countries. In his untiring zeal he is an example to all pastors who are called to follow him as he followed Christ.¹ Ferus.

preacher. The Greeks celebrate the baptism of the eunuch on the 27th of August. The Abyssinians, who believe that he was the converter of their nation, read for that reason this part of Scripture in the baptismal office."—*See Tillemont in St. Philip.*

¹ Azotus or Ashdod, situated on the sea-coast, was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, and though nominally belonging to Judah, was never completely subjugated by the Jews. It was taken by Tartan the Assyrian general (Isa. xx. 1)—again by Psammetichus, Herod. ii. 157; Jer. xxv. 20—again by Judas Maccabæus,

1 Macc. v. 68, by Jonathan, ib. x. 84, and was destroyed by the latter; by Johanan it was again taken and burnt, 1 Macc. xvi. 10; it was rebuilt by Gabinius, Joseph. Ant. xiv. 5, 3; Bell. Jud. i. 7, 7, and belonged to the kingdom of Herod, who left it by will to his sister Salome. Ant. xvii. 8, 1; 11, 5. It is now in ruins, which consist of a mound covered with broken pottery and a few pieces of marble (see Amos i. 8). A little village near the ruins called Esdud perpetuates the ancient name.—*Alford, Hackett, and Ewald, in Gesch. Jud. t. iv.*

Note A.—ST. PHILIP.

The only deacons of whose actions we have any account, are St. Stephen and Philip, sometimes called the Evangelist, to distinguish him from Philip one of the twelve Apostles. Though the notices in Holy Scripture of the latter of these two deacons do not extend beyond his mission to Samaria, and the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch to Christianity, by which he became the instrument of the introduction of Christianity into that country, and to the fact of his residence in Cæsarea where he received St. Paul (Acts xxi. 9), yet from these scanty notices we learn somewhat of the position of the deacons in the first

ages of the Church. Though it was their duty to "serve tables," and to relieve the Apostles from the heavy charge of apportioning the offerings of the disciples, yet they were chosen, not merely for their abilities for this task, but also because they were "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and were thus able to speak with "wisdom" and by the aid of the "Spirit" (Acts vi. 5—10), to "preach the word" (viii. 4, 5, 25), and arrest the attention of doubters and unbelievers by "*miracles and signs*" (vi. 8; viii. 12), which attested the truth of their words. After his mission to Samaria, and the con-

version of the eunuch, he *preached the gospel at Azotus* (Ashdod). After that Philip seems to have remained stationary for a time, and the house in which he and his four daughters "which did prophesy" (Acts xxi. 9) lived at

Cæsarea was shown in the time of St. Jerome (*Epist. Paulæ*, § 5). Then the Scriptural accounts of the Evangelists end. In the *Acta Sanctorum*, however, a tradition is recorded that he died Bishop of Tralles.

NOTE B.—SIMON MAGUS.

Although *heresies*, or the formal separation of unbelievers from the Church of Christ, did not take place until a later period, yet we know from the Epistles that there were false teachers from the first. At the beginning, however, heresy was not so much a corruption of Christianity from within, as an attempt to mingle the religion of Christ with the false and corrupt reveries of those who were without, and especially of those who were afterwards known by the name of Gnostics (*Burton's Bamp. Lect.*, Lect. iv. and notes 38—53). Simon Magus was one, and apparently the earliest, as he was the greatest, of these teachers (*Epiphanius, Hæres.*, xxi. 1). At the death of Stephen he possessed great authority and reputation in Samaria, where he had given himself out to be, and was regarded as, *the great power of God*.

Simon, usually called Magus or the Sorcerer, who is thus distinguished as the first formal heretic, was a native of Gitta, or Gittum, a village in Samaria (*Justin Martyr*, Apol. 1, 26). He is supposed to have resided in Antioch, and to have studied at Alexandria (*Clementine Homilies*, ii. 22; *Walch*, 1, 142—4; *Bishop Kaye's Justin Martyr*, p. 26), afterwards the chief seat of the Neo-Platonic school, and at that time the favourite resort of students in Magic, and of teachers who combined the mystical lore of philosophical Judaism with the speculations of Greek and Oriental philosophy. These teachers, again, often mingled the arts of Magic with the profession of mysteries, and the claim to possess an insight into the knowledge of an esoteric meaning hidden under the theological systems of Greece, Persia, and Egypt (*Irenæus*, 1, 23, 4. *Plotinus*

adv. Gnost. xiv.). In the schools of Antioch the Pantheism of Indian philosophy mingled with the mysticism of the Cabbala (*Renan, Les Apôtres*, ch. xv.). In his visit to Samaria Simon was brought into contact with Christianity, and was struck with the evidences of a miraculous power possessed and exercised by Philip greater than that to which he himself pretended. In order then to support his pretensions to the possession of Divine power, he sought to obtain the means of working similar miracles to those which Philip had wrought. For a time, probably but brief, he confessed himself a Christian, and was baptized, but afterwards relapsed into his old heresy, which, however, he seems to have modified after his acquaintance with Christianity. His system, made up of Classical, Magian, and Buddhist speculations, was essentially Pantheistic, and an anticipation of almost all later forms of this subtle and attractive heresy. This system Simon is said to have set forth in a volume which he called "The Grand Exposition" (*Philosophumena*, iv. 7; vi. 1; x. 4). He is reported afterwards to have wandered into various countries, "choosing especially those which the gospel had not yet reached, and advancing to pre-occupy the ground by his own system, in which the name of Christ was now introduced" (*Robertson's History of the Christ. Church*, Book I. ch. 4). At Tyre he is said to have bought a slave girl, whom he named Helena, and who became the companion of his subsequent travels. To her he is also said to have given the name, and to have invested her with the attributes, of Luna, and to have declared that she

was the Wisdom which had descended from the highest heaven (*Clement. Recognitions*, ii. 12). In the reign of the Emperor Claudius he came to Rome, where he acquired great celebrity, and was honoured with a statue, erected on the island of Æsculapius in the Tibur (*Justin Martyr*, Apol. 1, 26). He is said to have visited Rome, as Dr. Burton (*Bampton Lect.*, Lect. iv.) thinks, about the year A.D. 52, but to have left it before A.D. 56, when he made another visit there at the time when St. Paul was imprisoned the second time in that city, and that in proof of his claim to possess miraculous power, he undertook to raise himself from the ground, and to fly in the air. In attempting this, however, he fell to the ground and was killed. This account of his death has been doubted by many, but it is certain that an adventurer really made some such attempt in the reign of Nero (*Sueton. Ner.* 12; *Juvenal*, Sat. iii. 79; see also *Beausobre*, *Hist.*, i. 203; *Burton's Bampton Lect.*, note 41).

It is not easy to ascertain what was the exact relation in which Simon stood to the Valentinians and other Gnostic sects of the second century. The scheme of the æons, which made up so large a part of the teaching of these heretics, had probably been developed considerably from the first conceptions of Simon. Adopting from Heraclitus the principle that fire was the vital and originating principle of the universe, and having borrowed, according to Hippolytus, from Euphrates and Acemes the idea of good and evil æons, he seems, so far as we can gather, to have held that the Supreme God, the Unborn Fire, by a mental process produced six different orders of angels or æons, and that these, who embodied the whole potentiality of the Unborn One, created the world. His followers seem to have developed this theory of æons, and to have taught

"endless genealogies" of these powers. This, however, was subsequent to his times and an addition to his teaching. It was the Supreme God whose first or principal power (*δύναμις*) resided in Simon. Christ, according to his teaching, was the incarnation of one of these successive generations of æons, which was derived from God; he was not, however, the æon which created the world, but was sent by the Supreme God to rescue mankind from the Demiurgus or creative æon. He was the first who held that Christ had not a material body, but that the person who was born and crucified was only a Phantom. He is even said to have claimed that he himself was crucified under the appearance of Christ, though without suffering the pain of crucifixion and of death (*Renan*, *Les Apôtres*, ch. xv.). It is, however, doubtful whether this was his meaning. According to Simon, the writers of the Old Testament were not inspired by the Supreme God, the fountain of good, but by the inferior beings or æons who created the world, and were the authors of evil. He denied that there would be any resurrection of the body. And it is said that the lives of himself and of his followers were impure and vicious.

The sect named from him, the Simonians, were at one time numerous and widely diffused; they soon, however, dwindled away, or were absorbed into other of the Gnostic sects. In the third century they seem to have become extinct. So that Origen doubted whether in his days there were as many as thirty persons to be found who professed to be followers of Simon. (See *Tillemont*, *Hist. Eccles.* t. ii.; *Dr Burton's Bampton Lectures*, Lect. iv. and notes; *Robertson's History of the Christian Church*, Book I. chap. 4; *Neander's History of the Planting of the Christian Church*, Book II.

CHAPTER IX.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PRO-PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

CALIGULA.
MARYLLUS.
{ JONATHAN and THEOPHILUS
 in same year.

Acta viii. 3.
Gal. i. 13.
1 Tim. i. 18.
[Epistle for
 the conver-
 sion of St.
 Paul.]

(1) *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,*

IN the history of the conversion of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, which occupies the greater part of the present chapter, we have set before us—

(1) A motive for rendering thanks to God who gave to the nations so illustrious a teacher of the truth, and made of the persecutor of the Church an Evangelist of the gospel of Christ.

(2) This history also sets before sinners a remarkable example of penitence, and an instance of the greatness of God's mercy in the conversion of one who had been so great an enemy of the faith and of the cross of Christ, and encourages all to repentance by the example of the conversion of Saul the great persecutor.

Corn. à Lap.
Chrysostom.

Olshausen.
Gorranus.

Not satisfied with the slaughter of Stephen, Saul¹ is represented as *yet breathing out threatenings*, as a wild beast raging and seeking more blood;² continuing in the same fury and blindness as when Stephen was martyred. Whilst Samaria was being evangelized, and the first-fruit of

¹ "*Saul. Hinc censent S. Chrysostomus et S. Hieronymus, Epist. xxvii., quosdam à tribu Benjamin servatos esse in communi ejus strage et excidio, Judic. xx. 45, ut ex ea Saulus hic futurus Paulus nasceretur. Sicut ergo Saul, Hebraicè vocatus est, quasi שָׂאֻל schaul, id est, postulat, scilicet rex à populo et commodatus à Deo; ita dictus est Saulus, quòd ad vexandam Ecclesiam*

fuisse à diabolo postulatus, ait S. Hieronymus in Epist. ad Philemon. Rursum sicut Saul persecutus est Davidem, ita Saulus persecutus est Christum Davidis antitypum, ait S. Augustinus in Psal. li."—*Cornelius à Lapide.*

² "*Spirans minarum. Sicut irati et furibundi minando solent ore et naribus spirare.*"—*Fromond.*

Ethiopia was being received into the Church of Christ, the fury of Saul was raging in Jerusalem. He is described as *breathing out threatenings*,¹ as though the fire within proceeded in a breath of destruction, needing not to be stirred up by the malice of others, but as though he sought the *slaughter* of the saints through his own zeal against the cause of Christ. We know, indeed, from his own words, that the death of Stephen was not the only act of slaughter in which he had joined. *Many of the saints*, he says, *did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them.* So that though Stephen is the only one named, the first and most illustrious of those who laid down their lives for the cause of Christ, yet he was not the only one who died for the faith by the instrumentality of Saul. His zeal, again, is shown in the fact that he *went unto the high priest*, and sought to obtain this commission to *slaughter the disciples of the Lord* at Damascus, as he had already done at Jerusalem, and that he was ready to undertake a journey of six days for that purpose. *The high priest* at this time was probably Theophilus, the brother-in-law of Caiaphas, who had been deposed a short time after the removal of Pilate from the governorship of Judæa.²

In the conversion of Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, we are at once carried back to that Saul of the same tribe, who was of old the persecutor of David as this other was of Him who, after the flesh, was the son of David. In the persecution of the Church there seems a striking agreement with the prophecy which Jacob uttered, *Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.* Here this son of Benjamin is presented to us, in the beginning of his career, a persecutor of the Church, *breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord* in the morning of his life, and in the evening *at night dividing the spoil*, feeding, as a true shepherd, the flock of God with the words of truth and the sacraments of the gospel.

Saul was yet *breathing out threatenings*.³ He was arrested

¹ "ἐτι—yet, connects this verse with chap. viii. 3."—*Hackett*.

² "It is uncertain who was the high priest at that time, as the year of the conversion of the Apostle is not determined. If the conversion of Saul took place as early as the year 36 (Hug, Olshausen, Meyer, 35) then Caiaphas was still in office, who was deposed by

Vitellius in the year 36. Jonathan, the son of Ananus, succeeded him, and he was succeeded in the year 37 by his brother Theophilus (Joseph. Ant. xviii. 4). It was probably the latter who was in office."—*Lange*.

³ "Rectè spirare dicitur minas citra mortem et cædem etiam violentam, tanquam fumum quendam immoderati

Chrysostom.

Salmeron.

Rom. x. 1.

in the midst of his zeal, and drawn into the Church of God, even whilst bent upon the work of persecution. The earnestness and impassioned zeal which distinguished him after his conversion marked his character now. If purified and directed aright after the call of Christ, it was there before, even though it were a zeal *not according to knowledge*. In this, as in so many other instances, we have an example of the way in which the Holy Spirit sanctifies the natural gifts of man, and directs the blind and uncultured zeal of the natural man, without, however, destroying the natural character.

Acts xix. 9,
23.

(2) *And desired of him letters to Damascus¹ to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

Lange.

Here, again, we have the forwardness of Saul and his zeal in the work of persecution pointed out. *He desired of him letters*, a separate one probably for the authorities of each synagogue, for in the use of this word *synagogues* in the plural we have the fact of the large number of the Jews living at Damascus indicated, a fact which is confirmed by history. As the Romans permitted the Jews to live according to their own laws, and to inflict the punishments directed by their law, the authorities at Damascus would seem to have the power of binding those who were obnoxious to their law, and to hand them over, for trial and condemnation, to the authorities at Jerusalem.² It was not to

zeli, et iracundi furoris. Fervidæ namque naturæ erat; et tanquam Saul olim zelabat contra Amalechitas, ita iste in discipulos Domini: ita enim appellabantur, quotquot Christi nomen profitebantur. Nec expectavit Dominus ut expleret furorem vel extingueret flammæ affectus sui et fatigatus vagando mansuesceret et tunc tandem trahe-ret, sed dum vigeret in media insania, ipsum cepit ut ostenderet potentiam suam. Enimverò medicum tunc maxime admiramur, quando febrem cum infestior est, et morbi vis vehementior, extingui-
re valet. Vox enim Domini quasi ros desuper descendens ex ipso furore flammæ liberavit. Hæc autem persecutio utilis erat suis, quò magis à peccato recederent et Christum amplecterentur qui pro sua bonitate quibuscunque vir-

gis novit suos castigare vel ad salutem, vel ad meritum."—*Salmeron*.

¹ On Damascus, see note A. at the end of this chapter.

² "Damascus was a city conquered by the Romans, who granted to the Jews everywhere to live according to their own laws. This probably included in it a permission to scourge and use lesser punishments in their synagogues, and also to apprehend and send to Jerusalem greater delinquents who deserved a more severe animadversion. We know it included a permission to send annually, from every part of the Roman empire, large sums of money to Jerusalem, which was of far greater consequence than their sending now and then a delinquent to be punished. Not only those who were born of Jew-

the civil rulers that these letters were addressed, but to the *synagogues*, in which the authority of the high priest at Jerusalem was acknowledged, and this extended not only to Damascus but even to Babylon and Alexandria.¹ It may be that the attention to the wishes of the Sanhedrim and of the high priest was the greater in this city and at that time, because Aretas, the king who then occupied Damascus, was desirous of propitiating the good-will of the Jews in that city. Saul, in his zeal to extirpate Christianity, seems to have gone beyond the rest of his countrymen in cruelty. The crowd from Jerusalem which witnessed the death of Christ yet permitted the *women* to stand beneath the cross, and to minister to Christ without molestation, whilst Saul, in the blind excess of his zeal, is ready to persecute alike both *men* and *women*.

The Christian religion is here, in accordance with Hebrew usage, spoken of as a *way*,—as it is the way of the Lord, the way which leads us to heaven, and in which we follow Christ, who is *the way*.² A *way* in which we are to walk with all circumspection and diligence, and in which we are neither to slumber nor to linger; a *way* in which daily progress is to be made, and which is to be trodden, not by the feet of the body, but with the affections of the soul.³

(3) *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.*

This took place, as St. Paul himself says, *at midday*, and the light was of no common brightness, but a light which was *above the brightness of the sun*, and it *shined* not only

ish parents, but all who were proselyted to the Jewish religion, contributed to the expenses of Divine worship at Jerusalem, and usually sent many voluntary offerings besides. [*Jos. Hist.* l. 5, n. 5.] The amount of these collections was so great that the governors of provinces were sometimes uneasy at it, and for this reason seized the money and laid a restraint on the Jews, that they should send no more, as did Flaccus in Asia. [*Cic. pro Flacco*, c. 28; *vid. Jos. Antiq.*, l. 16, c. 2, § 3, et c. 6.]—*Biscoe on the Acts of the Apostles*.

¹ "Synedrii Hierosolymitani ea ætate erat auctoritas, ut non solum, qui in vicinia terræ Israëlitiæ habitabant Judæi, sed Babylonii quoque et

Alexandrini statuta ejus venerarentur. Vide huc *Herm. Witsii* Meletemata Leidensia, p. 23."—*Wolfius*.

² "*De via*, men that were in the way; for all the world besides, were beside Him, who was *the way, the truth, and the life*."—*Donne*.

³ "ὁδός tam rita, quam doctrina, quæ vivendi rationem tradit, cum via comparatur: ergo et *Christ. religio*. Cf. *Schleusn. Lex.*"—*Heinrich*.

"Via significat modum et rationem faciendi dicendique aliquid. Non minus notum est: Hebræos dicere *viam kar' iẖoxh̄n*, modum et rationem colendi Dei, ut in his: docere *viam Dei*. Monstra mihi Deus *viam tuam*, i. e. modum Te colendi."—*Morus*.

Biscoe.

Wordsworth.

John xix. 25.

Amelote.

Rosenmüller.

Salmeron.

Bengel.

Fromond.

Acts xxii. 6;

xxvi. 12.

1 Cor. xv. 8.

round about him, but also about them which journeyed with him.¹ This light, it would seem, streamed from the glorious body of Christ as it did at His transfiguration. It was no mere lightning, no created light, but one like the Shechinah sent immediately from heaven to arrest the persecutor and to reveal to the future Apostle the way of truth. One mark of the supernatural character of this *light* is indicated where it is said that it shined *suddenly round about him*, a type this of the grace of the Holy and illuminating Spirit of the *Father of lights*, mighty and swift in His operation upon the hearts and understandings of men,² and yet preceding that light, which was indeed to be revealed hereafter in his spirit, but which he was yet unable to discern.

This *light from heaven* arrested the steps of Saul when he had come near *Damascus*. As at all times God's deliverance is more evident when wrought in the hour of extreme peril, so here Saul was staid in his course, and the danger which threatened the saints at Damascus was averted, when he had almost finished his journey and was about to enter the city upon his errand of persecution.

Matt. xxv. 40. (4) *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

Lest he should doubt of the source of that light which *suddenly shined . . round about him*, God spake from heaven with a voice audible to the Apostle and significant to him, though not to those with him. In this way when Christ was to be manifested to John the Baptist, not only was there the descent of the dove, but a voice speaking, that so he might know that he was not deceived in what he saw, but that it was a revelation from heaven made thus to his sight and hearing.

This call of *Saul, Saul* was, as the Apostle notes in his speech before King Agrippa, *in the Hebrew tongue*.³

As in all instances of conversion, so here our Blessed Lord knew Saul and called him from sin before Saul knew Christ; and that he might hear the voice of God he was cast to the

¹ "ἐπὶ in composition gives us to understand that the light enclosed Saul round about, and not only him but also his attendants."—*Lange*.

² "God the Father of Light useth to show Himself to man by light, external and internal, and so do His angels, whilst the devil is the prince of dark-

ness."—*Baxter*.

³ "Heard a voice—" in the Hebrew tongue," Acts xxvi. 14. It is a remarkable coincidence that St. Luke here uses the Hebrew form of the name Saul, not that which he generally gives, as in verse 1. [Σαούλ, not Σαῦλος.]—"Cook on Acts.

earth. Thus does God first humiliate those whom He is about to raise from sin, to be partakers of His light and His holiness;¹ hence Saul not only *fell to the earth*, but he fell blinded. His passion, the fury which impelled him, was extinguished or assuaged by fear, and when this was stilled he was able to hear the call from God.² For this reason it is that God removes men by sickness, or sorrow, or humiliation, from the world, that they may the better attend to His voice.

Ferna.

Chrysostom.

(5) *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* Acts v. 39.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks, a common proverbial expression which is met with in classical literature as well as in the language of Palestine.³ By it our Lord intimates that Saul was at that time endeavouring to repress the voice of conscience, and that it was difficult for him to do so.⁴ He also reminds us that it is hard at all times to strive against the commands and the power of God, that resistance to His calls brings with it sure suffering, and that sin is followed by a bitterness which thus becomes the punishment for sin.

Salmeron.

Gorranus.

I am Jesus. Christ was showing the greatness of His power by arresting the persecutor in his career and making of him *a chosen vessel*, by which His name was to be proclaimed amongst the Gentiles. At the moment in which He does this He asserts the lowliness of that nature which He had united to the nature of God. He was still *Jesus*: He who had been crucified between two thieves; He whose members

Dion. Carth.

¹ "Humiliation is a Christian way to exaltation, and brings us even to a conference with God." — *Sparke's Centillula*.

² "Quo terrore affectus furorem desinit et mitior factus, hujus se servum ficit, quem Dominum vocat, et tanquam hostem persequabatur." — *Gagneius*.

³ "Κέντρον denotes, as also βούκεντρον, a scourge furnished with sharp points (from κεντρώ), employed for driving horses and oxen; and λατρίζειν denotes to strike with the foot (from λάξ), to strike out behind like a horse. To kick against the pricks therefore means to increase one's pain by resistance." — *Olshausen*.

"Terentius in Phormione, Act 1, scene 2, verse 27, ait,

Venere in mentem mihi isthæc: nam quæ inscitia est,

Adversus stimulum calces, subintellige, adhibere. Apud Ammianum Marcellin., lib. xviii., *contra acumina calcitrare*. Est et apud Æschylum in Agamemnone, vers. 16, 20. Euripidem in Bacchis, et Pindarum in fine Pythiæ secundæ." — *Hardouin*.

⁴ "Putamus, id quod verba *contra stimulum calcitrare* metaphoricè etiam innuant, Sauli animum, antequam Jesus illi appareret, jam crebris interioris gratiæ divinæ motibus excitatum fuisse ut a proposito desisteret; quibus tamen motibus ille minimè obtemperaverit, sed contrà restiterit." — *Beelen*.

Saul was then persecuting, and who had been made members of His body because of that humanity which he had taken up, and united to His Divine nature. And in calling Himself by this name *Jesus*, our Lord revealed that to Saul of which he yet doubted. For it is clear, from Saul's answer *Who art thou, Lord?* that he doubted not of the Divinity of Him who spake to Him from heaven; what He had still to be taught and what he was taught by these words was, that He who had been crucified, who was *Jesus*, was at the same time *the Lord* of all.¹

Corn. & Lap.

Lange.

1 Thess. iv. 8.

Matt. xxv. 40.

Zech. ii. 8.

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, for then, as ever, they who persecute the members of Christ's body persecute not only man but God,² as those who despise His ministers despise not man merely, but the God whose ministers they are, according to His own words, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me*; and of His saints He says in another place, *He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of My eye*.

Luke iii. 10.
Acts ii. 37;
xvi. 30.

(6) *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

Dion. Carth.

Luke xviii.
37, 38.
See Gospel
for Quinquagesima
Sunday.

And he trembling in body and astonished in mind, at the great light from heaven and at the voice which called him by name, *said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* Here is the same acknowledgment of Jesus as the *Lord* which the blind man made who, when told that *Jesus of Nazareth* passed by, immediately saluted Him as *Jesus*, the promised *Son of David*.

Lange.

Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? From the moment Christ commands, Saul the persecutor became the obedient servant of Him whose members he had persecuted.³ His earnestness is seen here as throughout his whole life. He delays not; but convinced that this Jesus is indeed the *Lord*, he becomes His willing subject, and asks what he must do;

¹ "Quis es? inquit. Ignotum enim persequeretur id ideo consecutus est misericordiam, quia ignorans in incredulitate hoc fecit."—*S. Bernard*, 1 *Serm. in Convers. St. Pauli*, § 5.

² "Christ's servants should no more doubt of their seasonable vindication when persecuted for their duty, than if Christ was personally persecuted in their stead."—*Baxter*.

³ *Domine, quid me vis facere?* "O potentem Domini vocem, quam tam citò tantum peccatorem ad penitentiam adducere potuit. Et ô miseros nos qui toties à Domino vocati venire non solum differimus sed etiam contemnimus. Paulus unicam quasi vocem tantum audit et respicit non oblectatur, non contendit sed statim cognoscit Dominum."—*Hofmeister*.

not what he must profess, but what he must declare; not what he must believe, but what he must *do*, how he must *do* how forth his obedience to His will. Salmeron.

(7) *And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.* Dan. x. 7.
Acts xxiii. 9;
xxvi. 13.

The ingenuity of men who seek for discrepancies have discovered two at this place.

(1) St. Paul, when recounting the facts which attended his conversion, says, *when we were all fallen to the earth*, here, Acts xxvi. 14. however, he says that his attendants *stood speechless*. To this there are two sufficient answers. One is, that to stand bears commonly the meaning of to remain in a place, and not necessarily to stand on the feet;¹ the other is, that those who had fallen at the first moment of affright to the earth certainly did arise, and probably had now arisen, though they were *speechless* with wonder. Corn. & Lap.
Lange.

(2) We read here that the attendants of Saul heard *a voice*, whereas, when speaking to the Jews at Jerusalem, the Apostle himself says, *They heard not the voice of Him that spake to me*. Here, again, there are two answers, Acts xxii. 9. either of which is sufficient to remove even the appearance of discrepancy. *Hearing a voice* may mean that the attendants heard Saul's voice replying to the call of Jesus, but that they saw *no man*, that is, they could see no one from whom the call had come: this is thought by some to be the meaning of these words, and hence St. Paul in the latter place says that *they heard not the voice of Him that spake*, that is, Jesus. Others, however, suppose with more probability the meaning to be that the men who *journeyed with him* heard the sound of one speaking, but could not distinguish, as he did, the words of Him who spake, which were only audible to Saul, to whom they were alone addressed.² Augustine in
Psal. lxxvii.
Lyra.
Hugo.
Vatablus.
Corn. & Lap.
Lienard.

As with those who journeyed with Saul, so it is now,—all

“Stabant, id est, ibi erant, ibi stabantur, ibi manebant: statio enim se opponitur, non sessioni aut prostrationi, sed motui et progressioni. Sic Magdalena dicitur stans retrò secus pedes Jesu, lavisse ejus pedes: stans, id est, procumbens, genu flexo, Lucæ vii.”—Corn. à Lapide.

“In this passage οὐκ ἤκουσαν reports ‘did not understand what was said,’ as the word ἀκούω signifies in many places of the LXX. Gen. xi. 7; Ps. l. 23; Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. v. 15; Kings xviii. 26: thus, 1 Cor. xiv. 2,

οὐδείς γὰρ ἀκούει, ‘for no man understands him.’ Grotius, Whitby. Or the attendants were Hellenists, and did not understand the voice which spoke in Hebrew, xxvi. 14. Benson.”—Elsley. “The same usage exists in the Hebrew. One of the definitions of שָׁמַע (see Gesen. Lex. s. v.) is to understand. In Gen. xlii. 23 it is said that Joseph's brethren ‘knew not that he heard them’ (i. e. understood in the E. V.); for he spake unto them by an interpreter; see also Gen. xi. 7.”—Hackett. See in Introduction, p. lxvi.

Ferus.

hear the sound of the gospel, but to few is it intelligible because they do not receive it, and so cannot understand it. It is to them an empty sound only, the cause, it may be, of affright, but not of faith. The good seed is sown indeed, but it sinks not into their heart because of its hardness through indifference.

(8) *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.*

Lange.

The blindness of the persecutor was real, so that though he could open his eyes, yet he was not able to see with them,—a type this of his spiritual state at that moment, who had eyes, but could not see, and ears, but could not even understand the lessons taught by the ceremonies of the old law, nor by the teaching of the prophets, any more than he did those which were taught by the life of the Incarnate Saviour.¹ To all these revelations Saul was still blind, though *his eyes were opened*. But they led him by the hand as the captive of Christ, and brought into Damascus him who was coming thither to lead captive men and women, and to persecute them for their belief in the Saviour who now appeared to him.²

Gorranus.

Chrysostom.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

Hofmeister.

The eye of the soul must be blinded to the wisdom of the world before it can see and understand spiritual truth, and its gaze must be removed from the things of earth before it can contemplate heavenly truths. Not until Saul's bodily eye was blinded did he receive the illuminating light of spiritual wisdom.³

(9) *And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

Lange.

Augustine.

These three days of exclusion from the external world was the means by which he was better able to meditate upon Christ. For though he indeed saw no man during that time, he yet saw Christ. And thus in this *three days'* blindness of Saul, who rejected the doctrine of the resur-

¹ Ὡς δὲ οὐκ ἐνέβλεπον ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης—Acts xxii. 11. "Ea fuit imago Sauli qualis antehac fuerat, speciem habens hominis eruditi in lege, cum plane animo cæcus esset."—Grotius.

² "Ad manus autem trahentes. Ducunt Saulum ad locum ubi illuminatur, ipsi tamen non referuntur illuminati: typus eorum qui bona alios docent, ipsi impiè vivunt."—Ferus.

³ "Putabat se prius videre, sed tamen in ipsam lucem summè impingebat. Huic igitur peccato respondet pœna, quòd nunc etiam apertos oculos corporis quidem habet, sed tamen nil videt, talis prius erit in anima. Deinde hic ostensum est, quòd qui voluerit sapiens esse et divini luminis particeps, prius stultum ac cæcum se fateatur."—Ferus.

ection of Christ from the tomb, there may be a reference to the time of our Blessed Lord's withdrawal from the earth, and that Saul was blinded for this period of time, in order that he might be able the clearer to see and to believe the truth of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which is the corner-stone of Christian belief.¹ Gorranus.

This *three days'* exclusion from the world teaches us that the work of the sinner's conversion should employ whole days. When we refuse to give up our days to this spiritual work God oftentimes lays us aside by sickness, and withdraws us, as Saul was withdrawn, forcibly from the world. Let us, then, note the successive steps by which God wrought the conversion of Saul, and bear in mind that we have here the image of the conversion of the soul from sin now. Bengel.

(1) We are told of the light from heaven, the type of that light of Divine grace by which the sinner is enabled to see and to know what his condition is.

(2) Saul fell to the earth, as God now casts the penitent to the earth, and humbles him, that He may exalt him in due time.

(3) God called to Saul, so does He call to the sinner, and make him feel that his sin is not only against himself and his own nature, but also against God, and that when he as he persecutes Christ, nay, *crucifies Him afresh*, and puts Him to an open shame. Heb. vi. 6.

(4) As Saul was led by the hand that Ananias might come to him, so does God lead the sinner to His Church, that by its teaching he may be instructed in the way of eternal life, and by the sacraments which are therein he may be healed. In vain, indeed, the light unless we go on and are humbled before God at the sight of our sin;² in vain our humiliation unless we rise from our sins, and turn to those means which He has given us for the healing of our souls. Salmeron.

(10) *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.* Acts xxii. 12.

"Quia Dominum non crediderat etiam die mortem resurgendo vicisse, jam instruetur exemplo, qui tenebras triduanas luce reversa mutaret." Bede.

"Vocem consimilem Christus dixit illis qui ad se comprehendendum venerant *Ego sum Jesus Nazarenus*, atque illo verbo in terram prostrati sunt non minus quam Paulus; et tamen

a mala voluntate sua revocati non sunt. Elymam quoque Magum quis ignorat à Paulo fuisse excæcatum et tamen à sua perfidia minimè est revocatus. Vox ergo neminem cogit, sed quemque suæ voluntati relinquit: quare pro cujusque dispositione ac bona vel mala voluntate, vocationes Dei aut recipiuntur aut respuuntur."—*Salmeron.*

As the whole narrative shows, this *certain disciple* was not known to Saul, nor Saul to him except by the report of his deeds of violence against the Church of Christ. St. Paul elsewhere speaks of him as *a devout man according to the law* having a good report of all the Jews which dwell at Damascus. Zealous, that is, in all deeds of legal piety and devout in the service of God. This man was the appointed means by which Saul was to be brought into the fold of Christ. God works by the ministry of man, and He who had prepared the heart of Saul to receive the truth, now sent Ananias that he should complete the work of Divine grace in the soul of the convert.

Acts xxii. 12.

Lange.

Acts xxi. 39;
xxii. 3.

(11) *And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus* for, behold, he prayeth, (12) *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

The Lord, that is, Jesus Christ, as we learn immediately after, where Ananias speaks of Christians as those who called on the Lord's name, that is, as those who invoked Him in their worship, and bore His name amongst men. *He prayeth* that is, is even now in the act of prayer, so that the coming of one from Christ would be an answer to his prayer. This truth should have removed fear from the mind of Ananias as though Christ had said, Fear him not, he rages no more, he is no longer cruel and thirsting for the blood of the saints he is no longer a persecutor, for *he prayeth*.³

Lange.

Dion. Carth.

Bengel.

Jesus at all times sees those who pray.

Baxter.

Praying is, next to resolute obedience and submission to the will of God, the first part of the soul's conversion. Under the hand of God Saul does not rebel, he does not even

¹ "Observa quod Deus per Ananiam Paulum illuminat. Sic et adhuc unum hominem per alium adjuvat, ut omnes habeant occasionem exercendæ charitatis et ut humiliemur."—Ferus.

² "*Vocatur Rectus.* Erat etiam Romæ vicus ejusdem nominis ad portam Catenam, sic appellatus, sine dubio, à viæ rectitudine."—Fromond.

"*Rectus*, quia erat longus et rectus, uti Romæ trans Tiberim est platea quæ vocatur *Longara* quia longissima et rectissima."—Corn. à Lapide.

"In the Roman age, and up to the period of the Conquest, a noble street extended from the east to the west gate,

intersecting the city. It was divided by Corinthian colonnades into three avenues, of which the central was for foot passengers and the others for chariots. . . . There can scarcely be a doubt that this is the 'street called Straight' mentioned in the history of the Apostle Paul. Its length is about an English mile, and its breadth exceeds 100 feet. —Porter's *Five Years in Damascus*.

³ "*Ecce enim Saulus orat.* Venerat quidem ad persequendum, sed jam persecutio versa est in orationem. Venerat Saulus querere Christianos ut perderet: sed jam queritur a Christianis ut ipse salvus fiat."—Hofmeister.

murmur, but he *prayeth* for the forgiveness of his sins and for the knowledge of the truth. And in answer to his prayer, Christ sends Ananias to heal him. So let us when under the hand of God neither rebel nor murmur at His will, let us not plunge into fresh sin to drown the voice of God's chastisements, but pray that He may forgive and also heal us. Hofmeister.

(13) *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard of many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:* (14) *And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.* Acts vii. 59; xxii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

I have heard. This is the allegation of fear. Ananias dreaded to go to one who had made himself known and dreaded as the fierce persecutor of the followers of Christ. *How much evil he hath done* shows the activity of Saul in the work of persecution after the death of Stephen. In his own words, *many of the saints did he shut up* in prison, and when they were put to death *he gave his voice against them*; and what he did in Jerusalem he was ready and desirous to do here at Damascus. *I have heard that he hath authority*, and as the past will show, the will was not wanting, *to bind*, and to put to death, *all that call on Thy name*,¹ that is, all who worship Thee, and who show by their imitation of Thee that they acknowledge Thee to be indeed the Messiah. Chrysostom. Acts xxvi. 10. Gorranus. Cook.

(15) *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:* (16) *For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake.* Acts xiii. 2; xxii. 21; xxv. 22, 23; xxvi. 17. Rom. i. 15; xi. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Gal. i. 15; ii. 7, 8. Eph. iii. 7, 8. 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 11. Acts xx. 23; xxi. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 23.

He is a chosen vessel, that is, according to the Hebrew idiom, he is the instrument chosen by God; thus in the salm's arrows are spoken of as the vessels or instruments of death. *A chosen vessel unto Me*, to make known *My* Gospel, to carry on *My* work, to be the minister of *My* Psalm vii. 13. Lorinus.

¹ "The expression here is the one which the Seventy commonly use to translate עֲבָדִים לַיהוָה, a well-known formula in the Old Testament, signifying to worship. Gesenius (Lex. p. 938) says with reference to this phrase: *To call the name of God* is to invoke His name, i. e. to praise, celebrate, worship

God. Of course we are to attach the same meaning to the words in the New Testament. Hence this language, which states a fact so characteristic of the first Christians, that it fixed upon them the name of *callers upon Christ*, shows that they were accustomed to offer to Him Divine honour."—Hackett.

Sylveira. Church. He is a *vessel*, as all are, but not as many were, *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction*; not as Coniah, a *vessel* Rom. ix. 22. *wherein is no pleasure* and therefore rejected; but a *chosen vessel*, and chosen for this end, *to bear by his preaching and his life the name of Christ before the Gentiles*. Not to bury the treasure of grace in his heart, not to keep silence *before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel*; but to declare the truth of Christ and the message of salvation in all lands.¹

Ferus. *He is chosen*, for the work of evangelizing and of declaring that truth which before he persecuted, a *vessel* full of the Spirit, full of the odour of God's presence, *to bear My name*, Sanchez. which is *as ointment poured forth*. The true evangelist is only this, a chosen instrument to make known not his own thoughts, not his own will, but the mind and the will of God. Cant. i. 3. Salmeron.

Before the Gentiles: these are named first as the special field for Saul's future labours, and then he adds *kings*. Thus afterwards we find St. Paul preaching Christ crucified in the presence of the governors of Cyprus, of Achaia, and of Judea, as well as before Herod Agrippa and the Emperor Nero, and probably many others of whom no special mention is made in the concise Acts of the Apostles. Lange.

Fromond. *I will show him by experience how great things he must suffer*. The work of the Evangelist is not limited to his teaching by word of mouth, he is also called upon to *suffer*;² as Saul was hereafter to teach not only by word of mouth, and by his Epistles, but also by his endurance for the cause of Christ, since suffering was to be one of the marks of his being indeed an evangelist of the Crucified.³ Salmeron.

Acts ii. 4; iv. 31; viii. 17; xiii. 53; xxii. 12, 13.

(17) *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me,*

¹ "Est Evangelici viri apta descriptio, *vas portans nomen Dei*: quia secum circumfert Deum et quaecumque se in partem dat, eodem infert, neque quicquam olet nisi Deum, sicut vas quod ab eo exhalat odorem quod in se continet. *Christi*, inquit hoc celeste vas, *bonus odor sumus*. Neque fractum vas istud à Nerone odorem reliquit, quem imbiberat, nam abscissum à cervice caput sonabat tamen Jesum qui à viventis ore nunquam abfuerat. Sicut fracti vasis minuta frustra odorem servant, quo vas imbutum antè fuerat."—Sanchez.

² "Fortia agere Romanum est; fortia pati Christianum est, imò Apostolicum et Paulinum."—Corn. à Lapide.

³ "Ostendit hic locus, neminem esse ad prædicandi munus idoneum, qui non idem sit ad patiendum adversa animo comparatus. Multa ipse pati faciet alios pro nomine meo, multa et ipse patietur propter me, atque id beneficii loco ducet, ita ut in tribulationibus ipsis propter me toleratis aliquando gloriatur: et alios invitabit ad patiendum pro nomine meo, quos antea deterrebat."—Salmeron.

*that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. (18) And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*¹

Putting his hand upon him, that is, to heal him. Ananias is here represented as using one of the miraculous gifts possessed by the disciples in the early Church,—the gift of healing, of which our Lord Himself had said, *They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*²

Sanchez.

Mark xvi. 18.

There fell from his eyes as it had been scales; not scales, but *as it had been scales*, a sensation as though scales fell away from his eyes, the proof at once of the greatness of the blindness of Saul and of the reality and perfectness of his healing; it was no imaginary blindness, it was no partial healing; and with this healing there went on a spiritual cure. *Scales*, as of the old serpent which had covered the eyes of his soul, now fell from them, the marks of the passing away of the dominion of sin from the soul of the new convert.³

(Ecumenius, Wordsworth, Salmeron.,

And he arose, and was baptized. His regeneration and engrafting into Christ was consummated by his baptism. We see in this the honour shown to baptism. Not even Saul, who was converted by the supernatural light from heaven,⁴ and by the sight and call of the Saviour Himself, was exempted from the necessity of receiving this sacrament. No sooner were his eyes opened than *forthwith* he was commanded to be baptized. Here we may note the successive stages of this work of conversion.

Lange.

Olshausen.

(1) He saw the light which streamed from the person of Incarnate God.

(2) He heard the voice calling him by name and accusing him of persecuting Christ.

(3) His sins were forgiven him.

(4) He was filled with the Holy Ghost.

¹ "Quare non misit Petrum aut alium quendam Apostolum ad Saulum ut illius ministerio Saulus baptizaretur? Lucas nullam ejus rei causam ponit, sed ego puto ideo factum, ut intelligere-mus virtutem sacramentorum non esse ex virtute ministri sed ex ordinatione et institutione Christi: qua de re Paulus in Corinthiis suis."—*Hofmeister*.

² "ὦσεῖ shows that it was so in appearance, not in reality."—*Hackett*.

³ "Illa impositio manus fuit curativa ad depellendam cæcitatem corporalem,

non ad dandum Spiritum Sanctum: unde etiam ante Baptismum facta est." —*Bellarmin. de Sac. Confirm.*, lib. ii. c. 2.

⁴ "Hypocritæ et sui amatores cæci sunt. Simulatio enim squama est, calva excusatio squama est, amor sui squama est, quæ eis velat oculos mentis, visumque veritatis adimit. Sed has squamas Jesus per Ananiam, id est, per gratiam Dei, perque concionatores, confessarios, aliosque viros spiritales dissolvit et discutit."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

(5) He was regenerated in holy baptism.¹

(6) He was then comforted by food. So are these successive stages of conversion from sin seen in every true penitent. Such an one sees his sins by the light which is given him by God, he hears the voice of God calling him to put aside his old wickedness, he believes the truth revealed by God, he rises from his old sins, he receives the gracious gift of repentance, he is strengthened by the sacraments which Christ has left in His Church, he grows daily in strength by means of the spiritual food which he there receives, and then goes forth as Saul the persecutor did to the consolation of others.

Ferus.

Acts xxvi. 20. (19) *And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.*² Acts viii. 37. (20) *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.*

Lorinus.

Straightway. The Holy Spirit is a swift teacher, and is not tied to the slow methods by which man's instructions are conveyed to the mind of the learner. No sooner is Saul converted, than he is sent forth to preach Christ *in the synagogues*. After this, however, he was withdrawn into Arabia,³ that in the solitudes of Moab he might meditate and be fitted for the great work which as a *chosen vessel* he was sent forth to do.

Rab. Maurus.

This instance of Saul going forth *straightway*, to preach that faith which he came to overthrow, and *in the synagogues* to which he had *letters* against the Christians, gives us an example of the way in which we are called upon practically to confess the faith amongst those who had witnessed our former opposition to it.

Acts viii. 3.
Gal. i. 13, 23.

(21) *But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?*

¹ "Prius visum recepit in oculis corporis, quam perciperet sacramentum Baptismi, quem Græci vocant vel $\phi\omega\varsigma$ vel $\phi\omega\tauισμ\acute{o}\nu$, lumen aut illuminationem."—Lorinus.

² "Non ergo solus Ananias sed Ecclesia quædam Christianorum jam erat Damasci."—Fromond.

³ Arabia, that is, the province of Arabia, comprises Hauran (*Auranitis*), the ancient Bashan; and lies immediately to the south-east of Damascus—see Burckhardt's "Travels in Syria," and "The ancient Bashan and the Cities of Og," a paper in the Cambridge Essays, 1858, by Mr. Cyril Graham.

They were amazed. In this the Jews who heard him bore witness to the reality of the conversion of Saul, whilst the notoriety of that conversion was evidenced in these words, *all that heard him were amazed*. They speak significantly of the Christians as those who *called on the name of Christ*, who were not ashamed to own Him as the Lord,¹ and to worship Him as their God. But as significantly of their own tone of mind, they say also, *which called on this name*, not *which called on the name of Jesus of Nazareth*, still less *on the name of Christ*. They seem on this, as on other occasions, to shrink from using the hated name of the Messiah whom Saul now preached.

Chrysostom.
Acts v. 28.

(22) *But Saul increased the more in strength,² and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.* Acts xviii. 28.

But Saul increased the more in strength, and in his knowledge of that faith which he had come to Damascus to persecute, and *confounded the Jews*, not only by the argument with which he taught the people that *Christ* was the Messiah, but also by the startling fact of his conversion to that religion which he had before persecuted. He, indeed, convinced them as one deeply learned in the law and in the customs of the Jews, and he *confounded* them by a testimony which to them was far greater than that of Peter or of John; the testimony of one who had given such abundant evidence of his zeal against the faith in Christ. He *confounded* them not by reproaches, but by *proving* with patience and meekness *that this is very Christ*, and therefore that all prophecies and all types of the old law and all promises of the Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled in Him. For to prove that He was *very Christ* comprehends the proof that all that is related of Him is true.

Corn. & Lap.

Chrysostom.

Cyril. Hier.
Baxter.

[End of the
Epistle for
the Conver-
sion of St.
Paul.]

(23) *And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:* Acts xxiii. 12; xxv. 3.
2 Cor. xi. 26.

St. Luke speaks in the nineteenth verse of *certain days*, during which Saul was *with the disciples which were at Damascus*. Here he speaks of the completion of *many*

¹ "Qui invocabant nomen istud: Jesu nomen præ invidiâ non expresserunt; quin adeo ira erant exasperati, ut nec Jesu nomen audire sustinerent. Conclamatæ perfidiæ signum est, cum nomen Jesu contemnitur. Indignus salute est, qui salutis nomen dedignatur pronunciare."—Novarinus.

² "Plus on travaille pour Jesus Christ, plus la grace croît et se fortifie dans le cœur. Dieu trouve, sa gloire à édifier son Eglise par ceux qui la devoient détruire; parce qu'il aime à confondre la sagesse humaine, et à faire éclater sa grace toute divine."—Quesnel.

- days.*¹ We know from his own words that at that time, and as it seems most probable during that space which is spoken of as *many days*, he went unto Arabia, that is, unto the province south-east of Damascus, and that after remaining there for a time he returned again unto Damascus. Others have supposed that this retirement to Arabia followed on the escape from Damascus, but this is improbable, as in that case we should hardly read of his returning to the city from which he had with difficulty escaped. These *many days* were, as we read elsewhere, in the whole, *three years*. A passage in the Old Testament calls a similar space of time by this name, *many days*. We read that *Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days*, and then that it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of *Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath.*²
- We are not told the purpose of Saul's retirement into Arabia after having preached Christ in the synagogues, and so attested the reality of his conversion, though it would seem that he did so by way of preparation for that work to which he was to be called. In writing in after life to Timothy, his son in the faith, he speaks of the danger which a novice incurs who attempts to teach and take care of the house of God, and Saul was at this time such a novice, and therefore needed retirement, that he might be prepared for the care of all the churches.

2 Cor. xi. 32. (24) *But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.*

- 2 Cor. xi. 32. *They watched the gates*—that is, the guard of Aretas the king. This name was common to many of the kings of that part of Arabia, even if it was not a dynastic title like Ptolemy in Egypt, Candace in Meröe, and Cæsar at Rome. The earliest king of this name mentioned in the Bible was coteremporary with Antiochus and the Maccabees.³ The

¹ "Ἡμέραι ἱκαναὶ indicant tum illud temporis spatium, quod in Arabia confecerat, tum illud, per quod reversus inde Damasci degerat, ergo triennium, Gal. i. 18. Non ergo pugnat ἱκαναὶ ἡμέραι cum ἡμέρας τινάς, v. 19. Indicatur potius inde, lacunam hic aliquam in historia Paulina adesse."—Heinrichs.

² "The expression ἡμέραι ἱκαναὶ is of a nature that it may possibly comprehend several years: ἱκανός is very

often, even by classical writers, used in the sense of great, important, considerable, and in connection with χρόνος or ἡμέραι, a long period. Similarly in the Hebrew, יָמִים רַבִּים for example, 1 Kings ii. 38; whereas also in ver. 39, יָמִים רַבִּים follows, of the same space of time."—Lechler.

³ Aretas was the king of Arabia Nabatæa, the capital of which was Petra. The name was a common one of the kings who governed this country

Aretas who at this time reigned was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas. War had for some time been raging between Aretas and his son-in-law, because the latter had put away his wife, the daughter of Aretas, in order to marry his sister-in-law Herodias. As Antipas possessed great influence with Tiberius, Vitellius the Roman governor of Syria was directed to march against Aretas, and to bring him dead or alive to Rome. Whilst on his march in obedience to these orders he heard, at Jerusalem, of the death of Tiberius. This led him to abandon the expedition, and his troops were dispersed into winter quarters. The banishment of Antipas soon followed, and Herod Agrippa, his enemy, succeeded. What change this produced as to Aretas we are not informed, though as the war broke out to revenge a private injury received from Antipas, it is probable that Aretas would enjoy the favour of the new king, and of his patron the Roman Emperor. As Damascus had belonged to the predecessors of Aretas, it is therefore likely that either as a dependancy of Rome, or otherwise, Damascus may have been restored to Aretas, and that in this way he was now holding it with a garrison.

Kuinoel.
Hackett.

They watched the gates day and night to kill him. The persecutions which tried the infant Church of Christ were in almost every case of which we have any record stirred up by the Jews. Here it would seem that Aretas endeavoured to take Saul in order to obtain the favour of the Jews, and at their instigation.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

The enemies of Saul and of the Christian Church watched day and night to take him, but the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, kept more effectual guard for his preservation. God at all times watches over and will preserve in safety those whom He has called to some work which is still unaccomplished.¹

Lechler.
Salmeron.

(25) *Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.*²

Josh. ii. 15.
1 Sam. xix. 12.

from the days of the Seleucidæ until Trajan, when Arabia Nabatæa was incorporated with the Roman empire, under the Emperor; these Arabian princes were not independent, but subject to the Romans.

¹ "Verùm irritæ fiunt universæ illorum machinæ, quia insidiæ notæ factæ sunt Saulo, sive à Deo revelante, sive, quod est verisimilius, à nonnullis fidelibus, cum ex circumcissione essent, atque

cum illis sanguine juncti, quos ejusmodi latere non potuerunt insidiæ. Nemo igitur, qui utilis est ministerio Evangelico, pertimescat hominum consilia, sed speret adversariorum omnium machinas infringendas, si id ad Dei gloriam illustrandam magis spectaverit."—Salmeron.

² "Sent him along the wall, letting him down in a basket." See *Sharpe's Critical Notes to the New Testament*.

They let him down through the wall (διὰ τοῦ τείχους),
 2 Cor. xi. 33. through a window in the wall, as we are elsewhere told. In
 Josh. ii. 15. the same way did Rahab save the lives of the spies at
 1 Sam. xix. Jericho, *She let them down by a cord through the window: for*
 12. *her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the*
 Humphrey. *wall.* And Michal in a similar way saved the life of David.¹
 The mode of Saul's deliverance appears not to have been
 commonly known, perhaps because of the danger to those
 who had thus saved him. Hence, when some years after St.
 Paul relates the manner of his escape, he adds a strong as-
 severation of the truth of his words, *God knoweth that I lie*
 2 Cor. xi. 31. *not*, so that the mention of this fact by St. Luke, and that in
 the same words which St. Paul himself makes use of, is one
 out of many instances of the intimate relations which existed
 between the writer of this book and St. Paul.

Rengel.
Sharpe.

God saved his servant, not by miracle, not by some
 unforeseen interposition of providence, but by the ordinary
 means which human prudence still makes use of. Thus
 does He now act. Only when human means fail does He
 Novarinus. interfere by means which are above man.² There is a time
 when it is the duty of the Christian at all hazards to re-
 main at his post: there are times when it is his clear
 duty to avoid the threatened danger. Though it is the
 mark of the hireling that he *fleeth* at all times, because
 John x. 13. he *careth not for the sheep*, yet did our blessed Lord
 direct His Apostles and immediate disciples when perse-
 cuted in one city to flee into another. This Saul does.
 Matt. x. 23. He had no office with regard to the Church at Damas-
 cus, no obligation therefore to remain and face the perse-
 cutions directed personally against himself. His flight
 indeed would hardly seem to have been his own act, it
 would rather appear that the Church sent him away. We
 read here *the disciples took him*, as a few verses later down,
 when his life was in a similar way threatened at Jerusalem,
 we are told of the brethren taking him and bringing him
 Estius. down to Cæsarea.

"Quod hic dicitur διὰ τείχους per murum, non est langsden muur, sed door den muur, scilicet per aliquam muri aperturam, aut per fenestram domûs alicujus muro innixæ. Vide 2 Cor. xi. 33."—Beelen.

¹ "ἐν σπυρίδι, in a basket. That those who aided Paul's escape should have used a basket for the purpose, was entirely natural, according to the present customs of the country. It is the sort of vehicle which people employ

there now if they would lower a man into a well, or raise him into the upper story of a house."—Hackett.

² "Hinc patet quomodo Deus sanctos suos non semper miraculis è manibus inimicorum eripiat sed humanis etiam artibus eos uti velit."—Fromond.
 "La protection de Dieu se cache souvent sous des moyens humilians qu'il inspire. C'est tenter Dieu que de les négliger et d'avoir une confiance oisive."—Quésnel.

(26) *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.* Acts xvii. 17. Gal. i. 17, 18.

It is often asked how these words accord with the fact of the conversion of Saul three years before, a conversion which must have made some noise, and have been known to many, whilst here we are told that the brethren were *afraid of him*, as though they doubted of his conversion.¹ The answer to this is obvious.

In the first place, the war between Herod Antipas and Aretas had interrupted the regular intercourse between Jerusalem and Damascus, so that little was known at this moment in Jerusalem of what was passing at Damascus. In the second place, the long retreat of Saul in Arabia had weakened the effect of the first report of his conversion, so that those who had heard three years before of it, and had lacked the confirmation which his continued residence at Damascus would have given, may well have doubted, so that when they saw him at Jerusalem, who when last they knew of him was *breathing out threatenings and slaughter and hal-ling men and women to prison*, may well, from very fear, have doubted about the truth of so wondrous and complete a conversion.² Calmet. Lienard. Lyra. Tirinus. Acts ix. 1. Acts viii. 3. Hackett.

(27) *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to Him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.* Acts iv. 36; xiii. 2.

Barnabas took him. This act of kindness is consonant with all that we know of Barnabas who was called the Son of Consolation. His tenderness afterwards to Mark, notwithstanding his drawing back from the work, tells also of the same kindness of disposition and affectionateness of heart. He brought him to the Apostles, that is, as we know Acts iv. 36. Acts xv. 37. Chrysostom.

¹ "Dieu épargne aux plus grands saints les tentations de vanité. Il est bon souvent de ne pas trouver dans nos amis cette ouverture et cet accueil favorable que nous en attendions. On est heureux d'être comme forcé de ne s'attacher qu'à Dieu et de ne trouver de consolation qu'en lui."—*Quesnel*.

² "The language, it will be observed,

does not affirm that they had never heard of his conversion, but that they could not readily persuade themselves that it was sincere. The sudden appearance of Voltaire in a circle of Christians claiming to be one of them, would have been something like the return of Saul to Jerusalem as a professed disciple."—*Hackett*.

Gal. i. 13, 19. from St. Paul's own words elsewhere, to Peter and James, the only members of the Apostolic body who seem to have been present at Jerusalem at this time, the rest of the Twelve being probably engaged in preaching throughout Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria.

Salmeron.

Barnabas commends Saul to the Apostles for these three reasons :—

(1) That he had seen the Lord : that Christ had specially appeared to him.

(2) That he had heard Him : that he had listened to and obeyed His words.

(3) That he had boldly declared Him to others, and proclaimed Him to be the Messiah.

In these three things lie the greatest commendation which any Christian can receive that he has recognized Christ, that he has obeyed His commandments, and that by his example and words he has made Him known to others.

Ferus.

The very fact that Saul had been slower to respond to the invitation of Christ—that he had come into the Church after all the other Apostles—may have made him more zealous than they all when he set out on his mission, since *to whom much is forgiven the same will love much*. So that the fact of his having wrought evil to the Church may have been a goad to urge him to undo his first deeds by more boldly and earnestly and unwearily proclaiming the truth.

Luke vii. 47.

Acts vi. 1 ;
xi. 20.
2 Cor. xi. 26.
Gal. i. 18.

(28) *And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.* (29) *And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians :¹ but they went about to slay him.*

No sooner were they certified by Barnabas of the reality of his conversion, than Saul was fully recognized as a brother by the members of the Church at Jerusalem.

Lechler.

He spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus ; that is—

Sanchez.

(1) He boldly declared the truth about Christ, proclaiming Him to be the Messiah foretold of old by the prophets.

(2) He spake *boldly* through the power or name of Christ, which was given him for this purpose.

Patritius.

He disputed against the Grecians, that is, against the Hellenistic Jews, or, as the Syriac version has interpreted these words, “against the Jews who spake Greek.” And these,

¹ The *Vulgate* reads here, *Loquebatur quoque gentibus : et disputabat cum Græcis*. This reading, however, is rejected by most commentaries. The *Æthiop.* reads, *gentes et ethnicos*. This

reading, however, has no sanction even in the older Latin ecclesiastical writers. It seems to have been borrowed from the fifteenth verse. See *Joan. Millii Nov. Testamentum*.

exasperated at his defection, *went about to slay him.*¹ It would seem from this mention of the Hellenistic Jews, and from Saul going and disputing with them, that a large number were then present at Jerusalem, so that this was probably one of the great feasts of the Jewish Church, to which Saul had also come up in order that he might be present at the feast. This we know from several places in the Acts was long after his custom.

De Dieu.

Cook.
Acts xx. 16;
xxi. 26.
1 Cor. xvi. 8.

(30) *Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.*²

The danger which now threatened Saul's life seems to have come to the knowledge of the brethren rather than to himself, and they, as at Damascus, were therefore urgent for his safety, and *brought him down to Cæsarea.* Most probably the Cæsarea which was by the sea-coast is here meant, as from thence he could take shipping for Tarsus, his native city. *The brethren* accompanied him on his way, as it would seem, for his security. By this name *the brethren*—those, that is, who were bound together in fellowship, the members of one family—were the Christians at that time known.³

Lechler.

¹ "Ingenium mundi quem prius amabant, nunc, quia eis non consentit, odio prosequuntur: mundus quidem malos et sibi similes amat et provehit, pios autem et sibi dissimiles impedit, odioque capitali insectatur: nec vult argui et omnem qui corripit, odit etiam Ipsam Deum: non desunt ei persecutores, qui non vult mundanis consentire."—*Ferus.*

² See on Tarsus note B at the end of this chapter.

³ There were two cities named Cæsarea in Palestine, and also one in Cappadocia, formerly called Mayaca, but named Cæsarea by Claudius—see *Gangæus in loco.* The two Palestine cities were distinguished from each other, the one by the addition of Philippi and the other of Palestina. (1) *Cæsarea Philippi* was an inland town in the territory of Trachonitis. It was enlarged and beautified by Philip, the tetrarch of that province, and received its name from the circumstance. It was sometimes called Cæsarea Paneas, from the ancient name of the city, a name which with slight modification (Bânîâs) it retains in our days. This city

was visited by our Lord, see Matt. xvi. 13; Mark viii. 27. (2) *Cæsarea Palestina*, sometimes called Cæsarea Maritima from its position on the sea-coast, and Cæsarea Stratonis, was an old town lying between Joppa on the south and Dor on the north. It was rebuilt and its harbour greatly improved by Herod the Great, who named it Cæsarea, or probably Cæsarea Augusta, in honour of Augustus Cæsar. It occupied ten years in building, and was not finished until the twenty-eighth year of Herod's reign. Philip preached and settled here (Acts viii. 20; xxi. 8); here dwelt Cornelius the centurion; and in this place Paul was detained two years until he was sent to Rome. This is most probably the Cæsarea to which Saul was sent on his way by sea to Tarsus, though some suppose that his route was through Samaria by land to Cæsarea Philippi, and thence to Tarsus—see note at page 333. See *Ritter's Geography of Palestine*, vol. ii. 193, and vol. iv. 243, 269—277, *Eng. trans.*, and *Dr. Robinson's Biblical Researches*, second series, 400—413.

In this conversion of him who had been a great and zealous persecutor of the Church, let us note practically the longsuffering of God, and thank Him for this fruit of His longsuffering.¹ Had Saul been cut off in punishment because of his share in the persecution and martyrdom of Stephen, the Church had wanted one great witness of the truth,—the testimony of him who was once a persecutor, and who became afterwards the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Thus is it in the case of other sinners; the longsuffering of God is not only declared by His own words, but by the example of sinners raised through penitence into monuments of His patience and love.² Had the Magdalen been taken away in her sin, the most illustrious instance of penitential love and the highest example of the cleansing power of Divine grace had been wanting to the encouragement of the penitent. Had Peter upon his denial of his Master been rejected from the number of the Apostles of Christ, the repentant sinner would have lost this great example of the longsuffering of the Saviour, this encouragement against despair of God's mercies. But not only this,—the longsuffering of God and His forbearance with the sinfulness of man is a call to ourselves to exercise patience towards sinners, since we know not how many an enemy of the cross may now be *breathing out threatenings* and blasphemies against Christ as Saul did: how many a one by his life may now be hindering the progress of the faith, who shall yet hereafter become a monument of the enduring character of God's love and mercy, and be made an instrument in turning many sinners into the way of righteousness.³

Lorinus.

¹ "Videmus in Paulo et in nobis insignem Dei patientiam: verè magna patientia Dei, quod nedum injuriam fert in nostra peccata sed etiam ita fert, ut de vindicta ne cogitet quidem; ita differt ultionem atque ita se gerit, ut qui malit noxam condonare quàm pœnas de peccatoribus sumere, quamlibet meritas, quamlibet etiam provocetur. Agamus igitur gratias ingentes omnipotenti Deo, quòd tanto tempore nos tollat, nec statim punit."—*Ferus*.

² "Quis desperet ultra pro magnitudine cujuslibet criminis, quandoquidem Saulum audiat adhuc spirantem minarum et cœdis in discipulos Domini, subito factum vas electionis? Quis dicat iniquitatis pondere pressus: Assurgere jam ad studia meliora non valeo, quando

in ipso itinere quo sanguinem sitiens Christianum, dirum toto pectore virus efflabat, persecutor crudelissimus in fidelissimum repente mutatus est prædicatorem?"—*S. Bernard, 1 Serm. in convers. S. Pauli, § 1.*

³ "O Lord, who didst make Saul a Paul, convert all enemies of Thy Church and service; reclaim them by Thy grace, or restrain them by Thy providence. Keep my hand from hurting any who are Thine, lest I persecute Thee. Hold my mind from delusion, that I may not think I do well when I do them or Thee any hurt. Curb my heart from passing a final doom on any, though at present never so bad. If I fall into error or sin, let me not stand obstinate, but yield to

(31) *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.* Acts i. 1.

The Churches of Samaria, of Galilee, and those of Syria, as well as that at Jerusalem, now again enjoyed peace after the persecution which had raged at the time of Stephen. As in the days of His Incarnate life, who so stilled the tempest that there was a great calm, so now after the sharp trial of persecution, and the scattering abroad of the disciples, again there was peace and rest to the Church. Rest of which the presence of Saul coming in and going out among the brethren was the significant token; rest which followed upon the departure of Saul from Jerusalem, and the removal of this cause of exasperation to the Jews.

But this rest or peace is not only an outward calm through the ceasing of persecution, it is inward also,¹ or inward especially through the presence of the Holy Spirit by whom the Church is edified. In this way is rest or peace (εἰρήνη) distinguished from comfort (παράκλησις), that rest or peace implies the cessation of external troubles, whilst comfort tells of inward peace. This latter, indeed, may exist even in the midst of the fiercest outward evils and the raging of man's passions. These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace, and this though the promise follows, In the world ye shall have tribulation.²

Then were the Churches edified. The word means not so much any outward increase or advancement as it does spiritual growth, the advancement in holiness of the members of the Church. It is used partly to imply increase of knowledge, but still more advance in Christian practice and edification by the compacting together of the living stones which compose the Church of Christ. It implies also an increase of belief in the truth, and in love and good works one toward another, and as a consequence an increase of

Him whom Thou hast sent, and to the Truth which He hath taught. Not rebelling against the light, but submitting to it, with eyes and ears and heart all opened to Thy word and Spirit, offered to me and calling on me, by and through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."—Dean Brough.

¹ "Ecclesia habet pacem pectoris et temporis ita quod fuit mente quieta in Deo et ab hominibus persecutione

quiescens."—Dion. Carthusianus.

² "Consolatio et timor sunt velut duo calcaria, dextrum sinistrumque, ut hinc læta tristes erigant, hinc tristia lætitia præfidentes extiment, sic etiam hoc mare magnum et spatiosum manibus [Ps. civ. 25], qua velis, qua remis transmittimus: et animi nostri ager ductis colitur sulcis et aquis irrigatur."—Lorinus.

that example of holiness which is significantly said to edify those who are without. Hence the Evangelist speaks of the *Churches walking in the fear of the Lord*, and growing and increasing in grace through the observance of the commandments of God.¹

When there was a time of danger and confusion, then the Apostles abode in Jerusalem; not without *comfort* indeed, since all outward trials are over-mastered by the presence of the Spirit, and this presence they possessed; no sooner, however, did peace come, than they went forth to declare the truth throughout all Judæa.

Acts viii. 14. (32) *And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.*

For *throughout all quarters* (διὰ πάντων) many read to all persons, or saints, and though either or both may be meant, if only one, then it is more likely that the word to be substituted should be *saints* instead of *quarters*.²

He who was ever foremost in his zeal in defence of the others, and foremost in healing, and in the affairs of the Church, shows himself foremost in his readiness to visit the Church throughout Judæa, for the present seems to have been a formal apostolical or episcopal visit to the *saints* in the west of Palestine, as a short time before we find Peter and John going down from Jerusalem to confirm the newly baptized converts in Samaria.

In the course of this visitation of the Churches, Peter came down to the *saints which dwelt at Lydda*.³ We have had already five names by which the Christians were at first called before they were known as Christians, and these several names are expressions of their duties.

(1) They are called *disciples*, and we read that *Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples*, and afterwards that *the number of the disciples*, that is, the Christians, *was multiplied*.

(2) They are spoken of as *believers*, thus *all that be-*

¹ "Ambulans crescendo et proficendo per gradus timoris quasi et merito et numero."—Hugo de S. Charo.

² "Petrus dum pertransiret universos, deveniret ad sanctos, qui habitabant Lyddæ."—Fulgate. "Or Pierre, visitant de ville en ville tous les disciples, vint aussi voir les saints qui habitoient à Lydde."—Mons Vers.

"Ora Pietro Pietro visitando tutti i Fedeli, arrivò finalmente appresso i Santi, che dimora vano in Lydda."—Ital. Vers (1747). "Es geschah aber, da Petrus durchzog allenthalben, dass er auch zu den Heiligen kam, die zu Lydda wohnten."—Luth. Vers.

³ On Lydda see Note C at end of this chapter.

believed were together and had all things common. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, so that it is no wonder that—

(3) They are also called *brethren*, thus—which when the brethren knew they brought him down to Cæsarea. Acts ii. 44.
Acts iv. 32.

(4) They are as at this place called *saints*; thus Ananias says, *how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem.* Acts ix. 30.

(5) Christians were marked out as those who called on the name of Christ, that is, who worshipped Christ as God. This is required of all who are named by His name: who worship Him, that they should follow Him as their Lord, that they should have faith in Him: that they should have love one towards another, as believers in one common Father, and preserve this charity by the bond of peace: and that they should be holy and undefiled before God, and unblameable in the eyes of the world. These first followers of Christ were all this and were called saints— Acts ix. 13.
Acts ix. 21.

(1) Because of that holy calling, that holiness of life which Christianity demanded of them.

(2) Because of the grace given them in baptism by which they were enabled to live holily.

(3) Because of that consistent holiness of life and conversation to which by God's grace they attained.¹ Ferus.
Corn. & Lap.

(33) *And there he found a certain man named Æneas,² which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy*

He found this man. He was led, that is, by Divine providence to this lame man, not by chance nor by his own seeking. It would seem from the narrative as though Æneas were exposed in some place of resort in the city in order that he might move the compassion of men, just as the lame man whom Peter and John had before healed at the beautiful gate of the temple. Sylveira.
De Sacrl.
Acts iii. 1—11.

He might well be said to have found this man. St. Peter came down to Lydda not to work a miracle, but to preach, and to strengthen the faith of the disciples by his presence. When here, however, he worked this miracle on the lame man, in confirmation to all of the truth of what he declared. For miracles are signs at once to those who do

¹ "He was no Christian who was not a saint by dedication to God and by profession."—*Baxter*.

² "Cum autem hoc nomen sit Gentilitium vel erat Gentilis paralyticus, vel quod Hebræis etiam communica-

bantur ejusmodi nomina. Syrus vocat אַנִּיָּא Anias, quod nomen reperitur etiam in veteri Testamento, ubi Hebraicè priore loco אַנִּיָּהָם Anihham, et Græcè 'Ενιάμ, et in posteriore אַנִּיָּהָנִי hhania, et Græcè 'Ανανίας."—*Lorinus*.

not believe, and also the means by which the faith of those who do believe is strengthened.

Acta iii. 6, 16;
iv. 10; xi.
21.
1 Chr. v. 16.

(34) *And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.* (35) *And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron¹ saw him, and turned to the Lord.*

In the account of this miracle a distinction seems to be pointed out between the way in which Christ worked miracles and that in which His servants worked. Christ wrought by His own power. Peter attributes whatever power he was able to exert to Christ Jesus—*Christ maketh thee whole*. In His state of exaltation He is still active in His deeds of love, and carries on that gracious work which He did but begin to do on earth; for the works of the Apostles, the works of all His ministers, so far as they accord with the ministry which they have from Him, are but the continuance of *all that Jesus began both to do and teach*.

Make thy bed—give to others this sign of perfect cure. So with His miracles did Christ give some sign, over and above the miracle itself. After the feeding of the large multitudes there were the fragments which remained, and were gathered up as an additional evidence of the greatness of His power. When He raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, He not only restored her to her friends, but He commanded that they should give her to eat. When the lepers were cleansed, they were still to go and show themselves to the priest, in attestation of their being healed. Health was given to the lame man, not only that he might *arise*, but also that he might evidence to others by outward sign the reality of his cure, and the proof of the new strength which had been given to him.

And he arose immediately. It was in this, the suddenness of the cure, that the significance of the miracle consisted. It was no slow process of healing, such as medical skill might bring about—he *arose immediately*.²

¹ "By ὁ Σαρὼν no particular place is meant, such as the modern village Saron, as some have thought, for in this case it would have wanted the article; but the well-known fruitful and beautiful district of that name, the flat coast line extending from Cæsarea southward to Joppa."—*Lechler*. See Note D at end of this chapter.

² "Et continuo surrexit. Unde modus tam subitæ curationis fuit mirabilior, quam ipsa curatio paralysis. In divinis enim miraculis sæpe evenit, ut arte medica curari possit, modus tamen curandi sit miraculosus ut si nulla medicamenta adhibeantur, et solo verbo æger subito curetur."—*Fromond*

The healing of this lame man, like so many of our Lord's miracles of healing, has its spiritual application. Here are two lessons for those who minister to the sick:—

(1) They must be exhorted to look in faith to the Lord and to acknowledge His hand—the *Lord Jesus maketh thee whole*.

(2) They must call upon those who receive mercy to *arise* in His strength and to walk the rest of their time in newness of life. Lechler.

(3) The miracle affords a lesson to the penitent himself. When Christ moves him to repentance He wills that he should *immediately* obey, that like this man, without any delay, he should *arise immediately* from the bed of his sins. Ferus.

In this visit of St. Peter to Lydda, and in his conduct there, let bishops and priests learn that they are called upon to visit *all* who are under their care, to strengthen those of the flock who are weak, to lift up those that are fallen, and to teach to *all* faith in Christ, and the necessity of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Salmeron. Matt. iii. 8.

(36) *Now there was at Joppa¹ a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.* 1 Tim. ii. 10. Tit. iii. 8.

This disciple, probably like many in Judæa at that time, bore a Hebrew and a Greek name. She seems to have been called Tabitha by the Jews, and Dorcas, which is a translation of the other name, by the Greeks.² She was *full of good works*, of habitual holiness, and *alms-deeds*, external works of love and mercy. From this notice of her *alms-deeds* it would seem that there did not exist in Joppa such community of goods as some think obtained for a while at Jerusalem. She gave of her own for the relief of the necessities of others. It would seem from this narrative, though this is not certain, that she was Whitby. Baumgarten. Bengel.

¹ On Joppa see Note E at the end of this chapter.

² "The name Ταβιθά, which is only to be found here, is explained by Luke himself by the Greek word Δορκάς, a gazelle, which on account of the loveliness of the creature was often employed as a proper name for women. The Hebrew name comes from צִבְיָה or צִבְיָה, a roe, a gazelle, of which the Syriac form is צִבְיָה. See Buxtorf, Lex. Talm., p. 848."—Olshausen.

"Les anciens Hébreux aimaient à donner aux femmes des noms d'animaux: Rachel, une brebis; Egla [1 Kings iii. 5] une génisse; Tabitha, une chèvre sauvage."—Sionnet.

See in Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences* an extract from Josephus, de Bell. Jud. iv. 3, § 5, in which he speaks of the name Dorcas as being "in the language of our country," as though he thought it necessary to add a similar explanation to that offered by St. Luke.

not possessed of large means, but that she herself worked to relieve the wants of others. An example of a woman living in the world, in common life, and active in supplying the needs of the poor around her.

Lechler.

She was full of good works and alms-deeds. If her alms diminished in any way her substance, yet they were the means by which her heart was filled with the more durable riches of heaven.¹

Quesnel.

Acts i. 13.

(37) *And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.*

When they had washed—according to the custom among the Jews in the preparation of the body of the dead for burial,² as Joseph seems to have done with the body of our Lord, for he took the body of Jesus and did as the manner of the Jews is to bury; for the Jews before they wrap the body in incense always wash it with pure water. In this we have an evidence that Tabitha was really dead, and that her death was known to all, so that the miracle was the more apparent to all who knew her.

Salmeron.

John xix. 40.

Sanchez.

Calvin.

Maimonides.

Calvin.
Fromond.

This custom of washing the corpse directly after death was not only a Jewish practice, it was one widely in use as well among the heathen as the Jews,³ a symbol of deep spiritual meaning, a fragment of the truth once acknowledged throughout the world, that the soul needed to be washed before it came into the presence of the Holy One.⁴

Now she was dead the alms-deeds of Tabitha were made known. The odour of the costly ointment of her good works and of her deeds of charity filled all the house as soon as the vessel was broken in which they had been concealed.

Besser.

¹ "L'aumône n'appauvrit point. Elle vuide la main, mais elle remplit le cœur."—Quesnel.

² "It is the custom in Israel about the dead and their burial, that when any is dead they shut his eyes and wash his body."—Maimonides.

³ "Corpusque lavant frigentis et unguunt."—Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 219.

⁴ "Corpora mortuorum non tantum Judæi sed etiam Romani, Græci et Ægyptii ablueri et ungere solebant. Hoc autem apud Judæos erat quedam tessera et protestatio futuræ resurrectionis, quasi corpora per lotionem et

unctiones ad resurgendum præpararentur, quem morem etiam Christiani initio Ecclesiæ usurparunt ut patet ex Tertuliano in Apolog. cap. 42."—Fromond.

"Ergo mortuorum corpora lavabant ut pura aliquando ad Dei tribunal sisterentur. Denique in mortuis eadem erat, quæ in vivis abluendi ratio. Quotidianæ ablutiones monebant, non posse quenquam placere Deo, nisi qui sordibus suis purgatus esset. Ita in sepeliendi more Deus symbolum exstare voluit, unde commonefierent homines, se ob sordes in mundo contractas ex hac vita migrare inquinatos."—Calvin.

(38) *And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. (39) Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.*

The Apostle seems to have been sent for to assuage the grief of those to whom Tabitha whilst alive had ministered of her substance, and to visit them in their affliction. The preparation for the burial of the body seems to prove that they had no expectation of her restoration to life by his means. Calvin.

The miracle which at the prayer of Peter was wrought had regard to two classes:—

(1) The members of the Christian Church at Joppa, who deplored the death of a sister endeared to them by the example of her holy life, and by the abundance of her good works.¹

(2) The widows, part of whom belonged no doubt to the Church, part probably not; to all, however, she had been a benefactress, and these had in their grief and gratitude displayed the tokens of her charity before the Apostle.²

(40) *But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.*

Matt. ix. 25.
Mark v. 41, 42.
John xi. 43.
Acts vii. 60.

Peter first prays, and then raises her from the dead.³ By so doing he pointed out the source of power by which the dead body was raised again to life. We are not told, indeed, that he attributed beforehand the power to Christ as he did when about to heal Æneas. Here, however, he wrought the miracle, if not wholly for the sake of the Christians

Bengel.

¹ "Exemplum hujus sanctæ fæminæ à mortuis resuscitatæ interpellatione pauperum, qui de ejus eleemosynis acceperant; ostendit illud Sapientis: *Eleemosyna à morte liberat* [Tob. iv. 10; Ecclus. xxix. 14], non tantum de morte æterna veritatem habere, verum etiam de temporali."—*Estius*.

² "Il n'y a point d'oraison funèbre si éloquente, qui soit plus capable de rendre un Chrétien recommandable après sa mort que les larmes des pauvres et les aumônes dont leurs mains sont pleines."—*Huré*.

³ "Oravit ut servus et Jesus exaudit ut Dominus."—*Hugo de S. Charo*.

sorrowing at the loss of Tabitha, yet chiefly on their account, and these would be in no danger of attributing the unwonted power to man. When he raised the lame man it was in the sight of a heathen population who needed to be taught that He who did the miracle had passed into the heavens, was God and not man.

Gimelster.

Peter put them all forth. He seemed in this to be copying the example of his Lord, who did the same when about to raise the daughter of Jairus, or it may be because he needed to pray more earnestly, and therefore in secret, for this great mercy at the hands of God, and he would be undisturbed by the tears and lamentations of the women, who, after the custom of the country, were loud in the expression of their grief.¹ It may be, however, that he did so in order to avoid even the appearance of ostentation in raising the dead.

Lechler.

Menoehius.

Salmeron.
Dion. Carth.

Chrysostom.

Leigh.

She opened her eyes, as though to show that to the righteous death was but as a gentle sleep, whilst he in recalling her to life used the same words, *Tabitha, arise*, by which those who are asleep are aroused, thus showing the ease with which the power of God is able to raise the dead from sleep.²

(41) *And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.*

In recording the various incidents in the raising of Tabitha, a lesson is given to every pastor of Christ's Church in his dealing with the soul of the sinner, *dead in trespasses* :—

Fromond

(1) That he should pray for those committed to his charge. In vain will be all administrations unless God bless the words which are spoken, and inspire the heart of the sinful one with the spirit of penitence.

(2) The admonition to rise up from the bed of his sins, to cast away the unfruitful works of darkness, and to stand or be strong in the Lord.

(3) The opening of the eyes of the sinner by showing him his sins, and pointing out to him faithfully the consequence of his wickedness if not repented of.

(4) That he should stretch out the hand, and aid the

¹ "Habet Spiritus Dei vehementes suos impulsus, quos si quis ad communem et usitatum hominum morem exigere volet vel ex carnis sensu metiri, perperam et inique faciet."—

Calvin.

² "Illa aperuit oculos suos. Tanquam si ex somno expergisceretur. Mors enim sanctorum est quidam prolixior somnus."—Fromond.

penitent one with the grace of the ministry of reconciliation.¹ Fromond.

(42) *And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.* (43) *And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.*

For this end was the miracle wrought, not that Tabitha should again be restored to this life on earth, but for the sake of others.

(1) That many might believe in the Lord to whom they attributed this miracle.

(2) That the poor to whom she had ministered might be consoled in their grief.

(3) That the Church should still be edified by the holy example of Tabitha. Calvin.

He tarried many days with one Simon a tanner, probably a disciple. He tarried in one place in obedience to the command—Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go hence. Lorinus. Matt. x. 11. As this trade was not only contemptible in the sight of the Jews, but those who exercised it were regarded as unclean, for which reason Simon did not live in the town, but *by the sea-side*, it would seem that the law with its distinctions of clean and unclean was losing its hold over the Apostle.² Acts x. 6.

St. Peter sought not the rich disciples to dwell with them,

¹ "*Thabita, surge.* Vox legis est increpans atque terrens peccata, et iudicium ostendens. *Aperuit oculos.* Opus legis, ut agnoscamus peccatum. *Dans illi manum.* Verbum Evangelii est, consolans, erigens, manum mortuis porrigit, qui verbo et sacramentis eos sublevar. *Assignavit illam vivam.* Petri officium, lapsos Ecclesiæ restituere, sicque eandem lætificare. *Notum autem factum est.* Conversio unius multis aliquando prodest. *Factum est autem.* Diu moratur in loco, ubi multus fructus sperabatur."—Ferus.

² "*Apud Simonem quandam coriariam.* Hinc Petri paupertas, atque humilitas apparet, cui neque pudori neque molestiæ fuit apud coriarium diversari cum tamen hoc hominum

genus sic esset sordidum ac vile ut illi in civitatibus non esset locus: ea opinor ex causa ne quid esset intra civitatem, id est, in frequenti hominum cœtu immundum, et ne quid olidæ illæ officinæ exhalarent terri, quod publicum aërem, et ab omnibus aspirabilem corrumpere. De coriariis sic Artemidorus, lib. i. c. 53. '*Coriariam exercere malum omnibus corpora enim mortua tractat coriarius; ideoque ab urbe secluditur.*' Hinc factum credo, ut Simon iste coriarius ad mare dicatur habere domum, extra civitatem videlicet, unde nihil hauriret tetrum ex officina sordida."—Sanchez. "Cada-vera et sepulchra et coriarium quinquaginta cubitos à civitate."—Surenhusius, *Mischn.* xi. 9.

but this poor tanner, and tarried with him because he was *worthy*, one of God's saints, though despised by man. In doing so Peter rebukes those who prefer the rich worldlings to their poorer Christian brethren, and who neglect the lowly in order that they may obtain the countenance of men whose only recommendation is their station and wealth.¹

Fromond.

Euthymius.

1 "Ὅρα τὸ ἄτυφον τοῦ Πέτρον ὄρα τὸ ἐπιεικὲς· πῶς οὐ παρὰ ταύτη μένει, οὐδὲ παρὰ ἄλλῃ τινὶ τῶν ἐπισήμων, ἀλλὰ παρὰ βυσσὶ· διὰ πάντων εἰς ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐνύγων, οὔτε τοὺς

εὐτελεῖς αἰσχύνεσθαι ἀφιεῖς, οὔτε τοὺς μεγάλους ἱπαίρεσθαι· ἰδίοντο γὰρ αὐτοῦ τῆς διδασκαλίας οἱ διὰ τὰ σημεῖα πιστεύσαντες." — *S. Chrysostom.*

Note A.—DAMASCUS.

DAMASCUS (*Dimeshk*) is situated one hundred and thirty-six miles north-east of Jerusalem, fifty-two south-east of Beyroot, and fifty-two east of Sidon. The beauty of the country which surrounds this city has been celebrated by the ancients as well as by modern writers, and Justin calls it "nobilissima civitas." In an Epistle attributed to the Emperor Julian the Apostate it is called "the eye of all the East, the sacred and most magnificent Damascus;" and in oriental hyperbole it is spoken of as "the Paradise of God," "A pearl set within a cluster of emeralds." It is probably the oldest existing city in the world, and has borne the same name unchanged from the first. It was famous in the time of Abraham, and the family of his steward Eliezer were inhabitants of the city or of its suburbs. The first mention made of it in the Bible is in the account of the battle between Abraham and the kings, when Lot was rescued (Gen. xiv. 15). After the incidental reference to the city in connection with Eliezer, the next time it is mentioned in Holy Scripture is in the reign of David, when the "Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer, king of Zobah," in his wars with Israel (2 Sam. viii. 5—7). David defeated these troops with a loss of twenty-two thousand men, and made the city tributary. Towards the end of the reign of Solomon, Damascus however asserted its independence, and its king became a bitter enemy of Israel

(1 Kings xi. 23—25). After the division of the tribes into two kingdoms, Damascus prevailed over Israel, and then exacted tribute from Judah (2 Kings xii. 17, 18; xiii. 3, 22, 25). Having joined Pekah, king of Israel, in his war against Ahaz, king of Judah, it was taken by Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, the ally of Judah. After this it was subject in succession to Assyria (Isa. ix. 11; x. 9; xvii. 1), to Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 2; Jer. xxxv. 11), to Persia, to the Syrian Seleucidæ, and from the time of Pompey, B. C. 64, to the Romans. Under the Empire it formed part of the province of Syria. It was seized by Aretas, king of Arabia Nabatæa, from Herod Antipas, and was held by his garrison at the time of Saul's visit at the time of his conversion. At a later date it was the residence of the Ommiad Caliphs, and the metropolis of the Mohammedan world. Though the number of its present inhabitants cannot be accurately determined, the most trustworthy estimates make them to be two hundred and fifty thousand, of whom about sixty thousand are supposed to be Christians. The situation of the city is one of great beauty, and the elevation of the great plain on which it stands gives it the advantage of an equable climate. The gardens, vineyards, and orchards, of almost every description of fruit-trees, which surround the city cover an area of about twenty-five miles, and justify the rapturous way

in which it has been always spoken of by travellers; whilst the fertility of the soil of the plain is so great and constant that a year of scarcity is unknown. As Damascus was for so long a time in the closest relation to Israel, either as a tributary or as an allied city, the Jews in great numbers fixed their dwelling here from an early period. Ten thousand of these Jews of Damascus perished at one time in the reign of Nero (Joseph. Bell. Jud. i. 11, 25), and a little after, as many as eighteen thousand (ib. ii. 20, 2); and even at a far later period Benjamin of Tudela estimates that three thousand

of the inhabitants of the city were Israelites. The number of the Jewish inhabitants in the time of the earlier Roman emperors is incidentally affirmed in the narrative of the conversion of Saul, since they were so numerous as to possess several *synagogues* in the city. For notices of the city see Maundrell's *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*; Porter's *Five Years in Damascus*; Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul*; Wieseler, *Chron. des Apost. Zeitalters*; Ritter's *Comparative Geography of Palestine*; Dr. Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, second series, 1852; and Tristram's *Land of Israel*.

Note B.—TARSUS.

TARSUS, the chief city of Cilicia in Asia Minor, is situate on the river Cydnus near its mouth. This city was the capital of Cilicia proper, sometimes called from the character of the land the *flat Cilicia*, and from its position East Cilicia. The western portion of the province, broken up by spurs and outliers of Mount Taurus, was known by the name of the rough Cilicia. The inhabitants of this portion were infamous for their robberies by land and by sea. The town of Soli, on the borders of either division of Cilicia, was the residence of Chrysippus the Stoic, and Aratus whom St. Paul quotes (Acts xvii. 28). Tarsus was a city of great commercial importance, and exported, amongst other commodities, a thick coarse cloth made of the hair of goats, and called from the place where it was made *cilicium*. This cloth was much used for making tents for shepherds (Acts xiii. 3). According to Strabo the city was still farther renown-

ed for its schools of philosophy and rhetoric, at one time rivalling those of Athens and Alexandria. Though indebted to Pompey for the destruction of the pirates who were sheltered in the creeks and harbours of the western coast, and harassed the commerce of Tarsus, it sided with Cæsar in his struggle with Pompey, on which occasion it is probable that the father or the grandfather of St. Paul received the substantial privilege of Roman citizenship. The city itself was not a Municipium. Its situation exposed it to the devastation of the Isaurians, the inhabitants of the mountainous country on the north frontier of the province; it continued, however, to be a flourishing place in the time of the crusades. Though the soil of Cilicia is fertile it has suffered, like all the adjoining territory, from the oppression and neglect of its Turkish masters, and Tarsus only survives a mere shadow of its former greatness.

Note C.—LYDDA.

LYDDA, in Old-Testament history Lod לוד ה' אוד, a town eighteen miles south-west of Jerusalem, on the road from that city to Casarea, and on the south-west border of the tribe of Ephraim. It belonged to Benjamin, and was founded by Shamed (1 Chron. viii. 12). It was situated in the

rich and extensive maritime plain of Sharon. On the return of the Jews from Babylon, those who survived of its former inhabitants again took possession of it (Ezra ii. 35; Neh. xi. 35). The large village which now represents the old city is still called Lidd or Ludd. It is nine miles from Joppa,

and is the first town on the northernmost of the two roads between that place and Jerusalem. The memory of St. Peter's visit is still traditionally preserved, and the water-course outside the town is said to bear the name *Abi-Butrus* (Petrus) in honour of the Apostle. In the time of Josephus it was a considerable town (Bell. Jud. ii. 3, § 5). It was transferred from Samaria to Judæa by Demetrius Soter (B.C. cir. 152), at the request of Jonathan Maccabæus, and was added to the estate of the temple at Jerusalem (1 Macc. xi. 34; comp. x. 30, 38; xi. 28, 57). A century after the whole of the inhabitants of Lydda, with those of Gophna, Emmaus, and Thamma, were sold into slavery by Cassius, in order to raise the exorbitant taxes imposed by him (Joseph. Antt. xiv. 11, § 2), from which, however, they were soon after released by Anthony. In A.D. 66 this city was burnt by Cestius Gallus. In A.D. 68 it was again taken by Vespasian, and was rebuilt probably in the time of Hadrian, and a new name—Diospolis—conferred upon it. This name, however, has disappeared, and at

the present day it is still known as Lidd or Lydda. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, Lydda was the seat of a celebrated Jewish school, hardly second to that of Jabneh, and at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem it was presided over by Rabbi Gamaliel the Second. Though tradition says that its first bishop was *Zenas the lawyer* (Titus iii. 13), the first historical mention of the see is at the council of Nicæa, where its bishop *Ætius* signed the Acts of the Council. Its bishop was for a time subject to Cæsarea, but he is now a suffragan of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. A great church erected in memory of St. George of Nicomedia, said to have been born at Lydda, still in part remains, though in a ruinous condition. This church after having been destroyed by the Saracens was rebuilt in the time of the Crusaders, and, as some say, by Richard the First of England. The western end of this church has been converted into a mosque, by the side of which springs a tall minaret, a conspicuous object as the traveller approaches this village from the south.

Note D.—SARON.

SARON or Sharon שָׂרֹן ο Σαρών is the name of the district in which Lydda stood. It is a broad fertile plain lying between the mountains of the central part of the Holy Land, the Mountain of Ephraim, and the Mediterranean, and extending north and south from the Carmel ridge to Joppa. In a more limited sense the name is applied to the plain in the immediate neighbourhood of Lydda and Joppa, with which meaning it is used in this place. Gesenius and Fuerst derive its name from שָׁרַף, *to be straight or even*. This was probably the pasture land where the herds of David fed (1 Chron. xxvii. 29), though some think that a plain to

which the same name is given lying between Mount Tabor and the Sea of Galilee is here meant. The whole plain of the maritime Sharon was famous for its beauty (Is. xxxiii. 9; xxxv. 2; lxx. 10); *locus uberrima et campestris* (Hieron. in loco). The rose of Sharon—possibly the tall graceful and striking squill—furnishes a simile for female beauty (Cant. ii. 1). The old beauty of the place has continued down to the present day; but the plain has become a solitude, and a soil rich enough to supply all Palestine with food is under the desolating yoke of Turkey, in great part untilled.

Note E.—JOPPA.

JOPPA, now Jaffa, lying on the meridian of 32° 2' north lat., was the most important commercial place on the

whole coast. Its origin is buried in remote antiquity. Pliny says it existed before the deluge. *Antiquior terrarum*

inundations. Its importance as a seaport suffered, however, from the construction of the harbour at Cæsarea. It is first mentioned in the book of Joshua by the name of Japho, and belonged then to Dan (Josh. xix. 46). It was, however, a Philistine city, and was probably not in possession of the Israelites until the time of David. Here were brought the materials for building and rebuilding of the temple, and from thence the cedar woods of Lebanon were conveyed overland to Jerusalem (2 Chron. ii. 16; Ezra iii. 7). From Joppa Jonah took shipping to escape from the presence of the Lord (Jonah i. 3). Jonathan Maccabæus took it from the Syrians (1 Macc. x. 76; xiv. 34. Joseph. Antt. xiii. 9, 2). Pompey attached it to the province of Syria, but it was restored to the Jews by Julius Cæsar (Joseph. Antt. xiv. 10, 6). It was destroyed by C. Cestius

(Joseph. Bell. Jud. ii. 18, 10), but was afterwards rebuilt, and again destroyed by Vespasian, because it had become a refuge for pirates. It retained its importance up to the time of the crusaders, and was the first city taken by Godfrey of Bouillon. In 1573 Ranwolf found hardly any traces of a city remaining on the old site, but since that date it has regained a portion of its old importance. The harbour is now almost filled up with rubbish, and vessels are compelled to discharge their cargoes at a distance from the shore. The old fertility of the soil of the plain of Sharon, however, is still evidenced in the size and beauty of the lemon, orange, pomegranate, and fig trees which abound. In addition to this, recent travellers remark the trees laden with apricots, almonds, peaches, pears, apples, plums, bananas, and grapes.

CHAPTER X.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PRO-PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

CALIGULA.
MARYLLUS.
THEOPHILUS.

(1) *There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,*

Acts xi. 19.

Lyra.

IN this chapter we commence another important subdivision of the book of *the Acts*, and reach another stage in the history of the Church of Christ. Hitherto we have read of the preaching of the gospel but *unto the Jews only*, whether those who were living in Judæa and the villages of Samaria, or those who had come up as visitors to Jerusalem from more remote parts. In this chapter we have an account of the commencement of the ingathering of the Gentiles, and of those Gentiles who had not become proselytes to Judaism, and this took place at Cæsarea, the civil or Roman capital of Judæa.¹

¹ "Cæsarea (Palestinæ), *Καيسάρεια τῆς Παλαιστίνης*, called *παράλιος*, Jos. Bell. Jud. iii. 9, 1; vii. 2, 2; Antiq. xiii. 11, 2, or *ἡ ἐπὶ θαλάττῃ Καيسάρεια*, Jos. Bell. Jud. vii. 1, 3; 2, 1, or Stratonis, and thus distinguished from Cæsarea Philippi, lies between Joppa and Dora, 68 Roman miles from Jerusalem, according to the Jerus. Itinerary, — 75 according to Josephus (i. e. 600 stadia, Antiq. xiii. 11, 2; Bell. Jud. i. 3, 5), — 36 miles (Abulfeda) from Ptolemais (a day's journey, ch. xxi. 8), — 30 from Joppa (Edrisi). It is one of the largest towns in Palestine (Joseph. Bell. Jud. iii. 9, 1), with an excellent haven (Joseph. Antt. xvii. 5, 1, *Σεβαστός λιμὴν*, — *ὃν κατασκευάσας Ἡρώδης πολλῶν χρημάτων ἐπὶ τιμῇ τῇ Καίσα-*

ρος καλεῖ Σεβαστόν). It was even before the destruction of Jerusalem the seat of the Roman Procurator (see ch. xxiii. 23; xxiv. 27; xxv. 1), and called by Tacitus (Hist. ii. 70) 'Judææ Caput.' It was chiefly inhabited by Gentiles (Joseph. Bell. Jud. iii. 9, 1; ii. 14, 4), but there were also many thousand Jewish inhabitants (Joseph. Bell. Jud. ii. 18, 1; Antt. xx. 8, 7; Life, ii.). It was commenced by Herod the Great in the 18th year of his reign, and completed in the 28th (Amm. Marcell. xiv. 8, p. 29, Bipont.; Joseph. Antt. xvi. 9). Before there was only a port there, called *Στράτωνος πύργος* (Jos. Antt. xv. 9, 6; Strabo, xvi. 758; Plin. v. 14), fortified, provided with a haven, and in honour of Cæsar Augustus named Cæsarea (at length *Καيسάρεια Σεβαστή*,

And as the time drew on when this ingathering of the Gentiles was to take place, and in the one fold of God both Jew and Gentile were to be received to equal privileges, many out of the various forms of pagan belief sought admittance to the Jewish Church, or at least learned from the purer teaching of that Church to turn away from belief in the creeds and idols of heathenism; a prelude to that ingathering from all nations, which was to be one of the marks of the Catholic Church of Christ. This was also a testimony to the desire of the human heart for something more satisfying than the worn-out creeds of Greece, and Egypt, and Rome. Whether this man were a proselyte of the gate or no is uncertain; it would seem, however, likely that he was. What we know is that he was a Roman of no mean family, the Cornelii, one of the same family, therefore, as Sulla, Scipio, and others, whose names are illustrious in Roman history,¹ and that he was a *centurion*, belonging to the *Italian* cohort, or band, stationed at Cæsarea, most probably as the body guard of the governor of Judæa, who resided there. This band is not to be confounded with the Italian legion, which was not raised till the time of Nero, though the old Italian band may have formed the nucleus of the larger body. This band was composed of volunteers who were natives of Italy,—hence the name,—and not of provincials, who at that time formed the chief element of the Roman army.²

It is clear from this history that St. Peter and the rest

Quesnel.

Alford.

Hardouin.

Dio. Cassius
55, 24.

Hackett.

Patrizzl.

(Jos. Antt. xvi. 5, 1). Vespasian made a Roman colony (Pliny, v. 13). Abulfeda (Syr. p. 80) speaks of it as ruins in his time (A.D. 1300); at present there are a few ruins only, and some fishers' huts. It is celebrated in Ecclesiastical history as the episcopal see of Eusebius, the Church historian." — *Winer, Realw. Ritter's Geography of Palestine. Beausobre, Remarques sur les Actes.*"

¹ "Gens amplissima Corneliorum Romæ fuit: ex qua prognati sunt Cornelii Scipiones, Cornelii Balbi, Cornelii Nepotes, Cornelii Orfiti, Cornelii Celsi, Cornelii Rufini, Cornelii Taciti, Cornelii Cethegi, Cornelii Fossi, Cornelii Alexandri, Cornelii Lentuli, Cornelii Galli, Cornelii Cocchi, Cornelii Pini, Cornelii Sallæ, et aliæ fortassis familiæ similes." —

Hardouin.

² "On the Italian cohort or *σπεῖρα* see Biscoe on the Acts, chap. ix. The

conversion of Cornelius took place at the end of the reign of Caligula, or as some think at the beginning of that of Claudius. The Italian *legion* was raised by Nero. Some suppose that the Italian band or cohort was the same as the Augustian band mentioned later in Acts xxvii. 1 (Lorinus). This cohort is often mentioned in inscriptions (see *Murat.* p. MLI. 1; *Orell. No.* 6709. Read *Borghesi* Iscrizioni del Reno in *Annali dell Istit. Archeol.* t. xi. an. 1839, p. 137, and *Cardinali Delle* *Monete e delle Coorti in Memor. rom. de* *Antich. e Belle Arti*, t. iii.). One inscription which Gruter and Muratori have given is—

L · MAESIO · L · F · POL ·
RUFO · PROC · AUG ·
TRIB · MIL · LEG · XV
APOLLINARIS · TRIB ·
COH · MIL · ITALIC · VOLUNT ·
QUAE · EST · IN · SYRIA · PRAEF ·
FARRUM · EIS ·

of the Apostles did not yet understand that the promises and privileges of the Christian covenant were for all, even though they had not submitted to circumcision, and did not observe the ceremonial law given by Moses to the children of Israel. This may seem strange, since our Blessed Lord had bidden the Apostles to *go . . and teach all nations, baptizing all in the same name*; but we must remember that the effusion of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost did not suddenly dispel ignorance, nor immediately reveal all truth. The work of the Spirit, as it affects the intellect of man, then, as now, was gradual; and this we might infer from the promise of Christ that when the Spirit should be given *He shall guide you into all truth*, guide step by step, gradually unfolding that which He came to make known. The conversion of the Gentiles, and their admission to the blessings given by the Messiah, was, however, no new idea. It was one which the Jews had long held, one, however, which they held together with the error that these blessings were only to be obtained by the prior admission of the Gentiles into the Jewish Church. We see in several instances that this error kept for a time possession of the minds even of the Apostles, and other disciples of Christ.

Matt. xxviii.
19.

Humphrey.

John xvi. 13.

Alford.

Acts viii. 2;
xxii. 12.

(2) *A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*

He was *a devout man*. These words mean that Cornelius had abandoned the worship of idols, and that he believed in the one true God, the highest reach of natural religion.¹ But the words, *a devout man*, had acquired a special meaning, they probably imply that he was a proselyte. Of these there were two classes:—

(1) The proselytes of righteousness, or of the covenant, those who were circumcised, and baptized, and admitted into, and incorporated with, the family of Abraham. These joined in the temple worship, offered sacrifices, and shared in all the privileges of those who were descendants of the patriarchs.²

¹ "Εὐσεβής, *pious*, qui vitam et mores suos instituebat ad normam legis naturæ, φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, cultor veri Dei, sed non circumcisisus."—*Rosenmüller*.

"Non virtutibus ad fidem sed fide pertingitur ad virtutes, ut Beatus Papa Gregorius exponit . . Per fidem venit ad opera sed per opera est solidatus in

fide."—*Bede*.

² "It was, however, provided that no proselyte should be eligible to sit in the court of the Sanhedrim, and a common proverb among the Jews expressed the distrust felt for them. 'Beware of a proselyte to the tenth generation;' or as R. Chiia extends

(2) The proselytes of the gate—those who acknowledge the God worshipped by the Jews, and had accordingly renounced the worship of idols, and were bound to observe the seven precepts of Noah, which were in substance the same as were afterwards prescribed by the Apostolic decree—to *abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication*. These latter proselytes the Jews regarded as strangers or aliens, and unclean, with whom therefore it was not lawful to eat, though they were allowed to dwell among them or *within their gates*.¹

Acts xx. 29.

Godwyn's
Moses and
Aaron.
Buxtorf. Lex.
Rab.

One that feared God. Even among the heathen this characteristic is mentioned as that of a worshipper of God, and though the Evangelical law is one of love, not of fear, and *perfect love casteth out fear*, yet filial fear is joined with love, and honour and reverence are the fruits of this fear of God. He was what we still express by the words “a god-fearing man.” There is, then, this distinction to be borne in mind:—

1 John iv. 18.

Lorinus.

Beelen.

(1) Servile fear is that which springs from a dread, and shrinking from punishment due to our evil actions, and this, though it may aid in turning us from the path of unrighteousness, is in itself neither virtuous nor acceptable to God.

(2) Filial or reverential fear, which springs from the detestation of that which is displeasing to God, and because it is displeasing to Him, and this kind of fear is the mark of a *devout man*, and acceptable in the sight of God. For he who fears not God is not devout.²

Dion. Carth.

Novarinus.

this maxim, ‘Never trust a proselyte to the twenty-fourth generation.’”—*Godwyn, Moses and Aaron*, Book I. cap. 3, and *Carpzov in Annotationes*.

¹ “*Proselyti portæ nec ad Ecclesiam Israëliticam pertinebant, sed in re-publica tantum tolerabantur. Si Proselyti ex gentibus legem Sinaiticam recipere et in communionem populi admitti cuperent, præter circumcisionem sacrificio quoque et baptismo initiandi erant, quibus tribus mediantibus ipsi primum Israelitæ in fœdus transierunt. Exod. xii. 48; xix. 10, 14, et xxix. 5 seqq.*”—*Con. Iken in Antiq. Heb.* Pars 1; i. § 13; xxii. § 14.

² “Timor humanus non est donum Dei hoc enim timore Petrus negavit Christum, sed ille timor de quo dictum est, *Illum timete qui potest animam et*

corpus mittere in gehennam (Matt. x. 28). Similiter etiam, timor servilis non est numerandus inter septem dona Spiritus Sancti, licet sit à Spiritu Sancto . . . Timor Dei qui numeratur inter septem dona Spiritus Sancti est timor filialis, sive castus, quòd dona Spiritus Sancti sunt quædam habituales perfectiones potentiarum animæ, quibus redduntur benè mobiles à Spiritu Sancto, sicut virtutibus moralibus potentie appetitivæ redduntur benè mobiles à ratione . . . Amor respicit bonum ad quod principaliter virtus ordinatur secundum propriam rationem . . . Timor autem principaliter respicit malum ejus fugam importat. Unde est aliquid minus virtute theologica.” — *Th. Aquinas in Sum Secund. Secundæ*, quest. xix. art. 9.

But we are told not only of this fear in Cornelius, but that *he feared God with all his house*. This is constantly dwelt upon in God's word as the commendation of a servant of God. Thus of Abraham it is said, *I know Abraham that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*; and Joshua makes this declaration, *As for me and my house we will serve the Lord*. And of those who believed in Christ we read the same. Of the nobleman in Capernaum, we are told *he himself believed and all his house*. Of the jailer at Philippi, that *he believed in God with all his house*, and was baptized, *he and all his straightway*. And of Crispus, the chief ruler of a synagogue, that *he believed in the Lord with all his house*.

Which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. We have, then, these characteristics which are commended in Cornelius:—

(1) That he was *devout* towards God.

(2) That he was possessed by a reverential fear of God.

(3) That he had love to his fellow-men, which he showed by his *much alms*.

(4) That he was constant in prayer—he *prayed to God always*: to none other save to the one true God, and to Him *statedly and constantly*.

Always, that is, assiduously and constantly. Cornelius, as we know from this history, prayed daily, and at the stated hours of prayer, which is meant by the word *always*. It was his practice to pray. If this word *always* is pressed, let us remember that he who desires God and longs for holiness of life does pray thus *always*. His desires and actions are so many prayers offered up unceasingly before the throne of God.²

A question has been raised, and much has been written on the question, whether the faith of Cornelius was a perfect or an imperfect faith, and if imperfect, how far the works done before a perfect or justifying faith could be acceptable. Much of this lies beyond the field of our knowledge. We may, however, note that faith, whilst imperfect as regards the object of faith, may yet be perfect so far as regards its subject. A man may hold firmly, sincerely, his faith in truths revealed, though there are other truths part of the deposit of the faith of which he

¹ "La prière et l'aumône sont de puissantes sollicitations devant Dieu. L'une soutient l'autre. L'aumône donne des ailes à la prière pour aller plus vite à Dieu; et la prière donne des forces à l'aumône pour la suivre."

—*Quésnel*.

² "*Semper* in sensu morali, id est, assidue, valdè frequenter."—*Lienard*. "*Semper* orat qui Deo adhæret, omnia ab Ipso sperat, petit et accipit, Dei nunquam obliviscitur."—*Ferus*.

Gen. xviii. 19.
Joshua xxiv.
15.

John vi. 53.

Acts xvi. 33,
34.
Acts xviii. 18.
Whitby.

Corn. à Lap.

Lienard.

Ferus.
Whitby.

Estius.

as yet no knowledge. He will thus be *faithful*, though he is faithful only in the *few things* intrusted to him, and such imperfect faith perfectly held will be rewarded by revelation of the whole object of faith, according to the promise, *whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance*.¹ Here we have the example of a Roman soldier, who held firmly and purely the truths which had been made known to him, and gave proof that he did so hold them by his devotion, his reverence, his good deeds, and his prayers, and as a reward for all this his faith was enlarged, and the fulness of gospel truth was made known to him, and the Holy Spirit descended visibly upon him, on whom He had already descended invisibly, augmenting the grace already given, and conferring upon him gifts of grace, which should be a sign to others that God had indeed accepted him, and that to the Gentiles the door of salvation was fully opened.

There are three centurions mentioned by the Evangelists, and all mentioned with commendation. He of whom our Blessed Lord witnessed, *I have not found so great faith, neither in Israel*. The second, who at the crucifixion stood beside the cross of Christ, and gave this testimony to the crucified, *Truly this was the Son of God*. The third is Cornelius, whose prayer and alms were accepted by God, and an angel sent to bear testimony to his faith. *Thy prayer and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God*. In this way, and by means of those who had been nurtured in heathenism, but who in their experience of the worthlessness of the fables of mythology, which mocked, could in no way satisfy the thirst of their soul, did God rebuke the backsliding of his faithless people, and gave to the faithful among the heathen that blessing which *his own* people spurned, and therefore could not receive. This readiness of the heathen to receive His message, and to believe in Him, and the blessing which followed upon such belief and acceptance, is shown in the faith of the Syro-phenician woman and in its reward. *O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt*.²

"Ut dixit Dominus: omni habenti dabitur et abundabit; ita Cornelio his naturalibus et aliis Dei muneribus superadditis ex gratia benè utenti, dedit pervenire ad manifestam Evangelium."—*Salmeron*.

"We may observe that the gospel made its first conquest over heathenism in a large city, *Cæsarea*, named from

the Roman Cæsar, the military stronghold and naval arsenal of the Roman power; and it made that conquest over a *soldier*, called *Cornelius*, one of the noblest Roman names, borne by the Scipios and Sylla—and the mother of the Gracchi was *Cornelia*—and associated with the greatest victories of the Roman arms; and an officer of the

Matt. xxv. 23.

Matt. xiii. 12.

Verse 44.

Corn. à Lap.

Matt. viii. 10.

Matt. xxvii.
54.

John i. 11.

Matt. xv. 28.

Acts xi. 13.

(3) *He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.*

Corn. & Lap.
Menochius.Huré.
Lorinus.
Stier.

Ferus.

He saw in a vision, evidently—with eyes of the body, not by mental revelation only—about the ninth hour of the day,—that is, at one of the hours of prayer appointed to be observed among the Jews, which it would seem Cornelius kept,—an angel of God—probably the guardian angel of Cornelius—coming in to him and saying, . . . Cornelius—calling him by his name to remove all fear from him, and to assure him that he was known to God.

Th. Aquinas.

Novarinus.

Bede.

It was in prayer that God's angel came to him, teaching us that without prayer the soul obtains nothing, and falls into all kinds of temptation. A Christian without prayer is as a soldier without arms in the midst of wakeful enemies. And the hour at which this revelation was made to Cornelius was that on which Christ died on the cross. Thus linking together the fact of redemption with the invitation to the Gentiles to become His disciples, to receive the full benefits of that Redemption, and to be baptized into His death.²

We may well believe that the angel of God was thus *evidently* sent to Cornelius for these reasons:—

(1) That he and his household might be certified that it was no illusion.

(2) That the Jews might be taught by the fact of such a messenger being sent that not to them only belonged the promise of the Messiah and the possession of the privileges of the gospel.

Corn. & Lap.

(3) That the Gentiles might be assured that the door of salvation was now opened to them, and that they were invited to enter in and to partake of the blessings and privileges procured for all mankind by Christ.

(4) *And when he looked on him, he was afraid*

Italic band, not of a cohort raised in Syria, but of native Roman blood. This Roman soldier was 'the antesignatus or standard-bearer to us, who were heathens' (Andrew's Serm. on Acts x. 34)."—*Wordsworth.*

¹ "Tanta à bonis operibus et Eleemosynis lux oritur, ut angeli lucem retundere videantur ac quodam modo offuscare."—*Novarinus.*

² "Semper in manibus tuis sit divina lectio et tam crebræ orationes ut

omnes cogitationum sagittæ, quibus adolescentia percuti solet, hujusmodi clypeo repellantur."—*S. Hieronymus in Epist. ad Salvinam viduam.* "Religiosus non est, qui non semper versatur cum Deo aut cogitat de Deo."—*Th. Aquinas.* "'Anima,' inquit, S. Thomas, 'sine oratione non proficit. Religiosus sine oratione, est velut miles nudus qui pugnat sine armis,' ideoque inermis facile ab hoste vincitur."—*Cornelius à Lapide.*

and said, *What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

Some have thought that the centurion might have heard of the gospel from the preaching of Philip or of others. It is doubtful, however, whether Philip had reached Cæsarea at this time. Be that as it may, the guard of Pilate must have known of the events at Jerusalem, the mocking, the suffering, the crucifixion of the Messiah, and have thus been in some sort prepared to receive the message from God of acceptance through the death of the Incarnate Saviour.¹

Thy prayers, which were poured out from a heart full of desire to be guided aright, and *thine alms*, which have been the outward tokens of thy faith, have drawn thy affection towards God, and have *come up for a memorial before God*—have not been written in earth to pass away as earth and all earthly things shall pass away—have not been written in water to be obliterated as soon as written, but have become an eternal memorial before God.

The *prayers* which we offer up to God, and the *alms* which are done in Christ's name and for His honour, ascend and are ever remembered in heaven. But then let us bear in mind that nothing goes up to God which does not first come down from Him. He inspires our prayers and moves us to every act of self-sacrifice, and when we pray we do so because He moves us to pray, and when we present our *alms* we do but present of His bounty, and because He gives us grace to make the sacrifice. In these words *come up* we are reminded of the lesson which the sacrifices offered under the law afforded to all the worshippers of God. When the sacrifices, and especially the whole burnt-offering, was consumed, the smoke that went up was a sign that the offerings were made to one in heaven, and our prayers are for that reason called sacrifices in the Bible. At one time they are spoken of as *the calves of our lips*, at another as *the sacrifice of praise*, and the prayers offered up in the evening are spoken of as an *evening sacrifice*.²

Cook.

Stier.

Lorinus.

Sanchez.

Novarinus.

Quesnel.

Hosea xiv. 2.
Jer. xxxiii. 11.
Corn. à Lap.
Ps. cxli. 2.

¹ "Innuitur ut dicit gloss. quia non meritis ad fidem, sed fide venit ad opera. Si enim non crederet, quem audiret, vel quomodo audiret Deus si effectum boni ab ipso non peteret? debebat quidem Deum creatorem omnium, sed ignorabat filium incarnatum, et bonis operibus cognoscere meruit. unde ergo venit ad opera in qua solitur per opera."—Hugo de S. Chavo.

² "La prière et l'aumône montent jusqu'à Dieu, quand la charité et l'esprit de Dieu sont descendus jusqu'à l'homme pour les operer, les sanctifier, et les élever. Rien ne monte à Dieu que ce qui vient de Dieu, et qui est fait pour Dieu. Rien n'attire plus sa miséricorde que la charité de l'aumône et l'humilité de la prière."—Quesnel.

John i. 9.

Dion. Carth.

He who does so far as in him lieth according as natural grace from God enables him to do, as a pagan might do from the light of nature—which, let us not forget, is light from God—desiring to be directed aright, and seeking this grace from God's hand, and supplicating the forgiveness of his sins, to such an one God will open a way by His angel, or by sending to him teachers to direct him into the perfect way, and to teach him those truths which are as light to his soul.

Acts ix. 43;
xi. 14.

(5) *And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:* (6) *He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.*

Elsner.
Beelen.

Gorranus.

Cook.

*And, or rather therefore,*¹ *because thy prayers and thine alms are accepted, send . . and call for Simon. Send now, defer not to do that which is bidden thee.*² Prove thy obedience by the promptness with which thou attendest to this message. God also tries the faith and earnestness of Cornelius by the lowliness of the host where Peter lodged. He has no abode of his own, he lodgeth with *one Simon a tanner.*³

Queesel.

God sends His angel to bid Cornelius have recourse to human means and the common way. In this way does He stamp the ordinary means of grace with His approval, though in so doing He acts by ways and instruments which we should have thought little likely to be so chosen. He who used an angel to convey His message might have entrusted to that angel the task of instructing Cornelius. He willed, however, otherwise. Peter was sent for that he might inform Cornelius of the truths which as yet he knew imperfectly. The faith, which at this time he had, was in God, and though imperfect as to the object of faith, it was yet a real faith and the direct gift of God. That it was a real

¹ "Recitè hic vertit Beza καὶ νῦν nunc igitur, ut quoque cap. vii. 34; xiii. 11."—Elsner.

² "Græcè καὶ νῦν, quod respondet Hebraico וְעַתָּה, ubi dictio est *concludentis* valetque itaque, ut Genes. xxvii. 8."—Beelen.

³ "Et nunc, ne differas mittere."—Gorranus.

⁴ "Cujus domus est ad mare. Apud veteres coriarii extra urbes prope flumina, ob mortua animalia, etiam ob

fætidus odores et ob frequentem aquæ usum in pellium preparatione, officinas et domos suas habebant Artemidor. 1, 53, νεκρῶν ἀπτεται σωμάτων ὁ βυρσοδέψης καὶ τῆς πόλεως ἀπόκισται corpora mortua attrahat coriarius, ideoque ab urbe secluditur. Surenhusius in Misch. c. ii. § 9, t. iv. p. 164 in tract. Bava bathra: Cadavera et sepulchra separant et coriarium quinquaginta cubitos à civitate."—Kuinool.

faith was shown in this, that through it Cornelius offered up prayers and gave alms which were accepted of God. This faith in the one God was now to be strengthened and perfected by his faith in the Incarnate Saviour, the Redeemer and Mediator.¹ Calmet.

(7) *And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;* (8) *And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.*

Cæsarea was about thirty miles to the north of Joppa. The journey, therefore, of these messengers of Cornelius would occupy more than one day.²

When the angel had spoken. In this is exhibited the prompt obedience of Cornelius; no sooner had the angel departed than he commissions his two servants and his attendant soldier to set out and invite Peter to his house. Calvin. We have in this the strongest evidence of his faith. There was, indeed, much to try his faith. Many would have reasoned that if the angel of God had been sent he could at least as well have instructed Cornelius as Peter could. Why, he might have asked, should I send for a man when an angel is present, and can do far more than man can do? But he resisted this temptation and did as the angel had bidden him; nor did the meanness of the habitation where Peter *lodged*, and the sordidness of the tanner's trade, hinder the Roman soldier from sending for him and acknowledging

¹ "In re ipsa nobiscum Augustinus sentit, qui diserte affirmat non potuisse prære Cornelium nisi fidelis esset (libro de Prædestinatione sanctorum)."—*Calvin.*

"Theologi post S. Thomam certissime tenent, quod infideles qui nunquam de Christi audiverint, si bene uterentur generalibus gratiæ auxiliis sequendo dictamen rectæ rationis, Deus qui vult omnes homines salvos fieri et ad agnitionem veritatis venire, ipsis revelaret quæ sunt necessaria ad salutem vel per Angelum, vel per internam revelationem, vel ad eos mittendo aliquem fidei predicatorem, sicut misit Petrum ad Cornelium."—*Lienard.*

² "From Cæsarea southward over the Kudeira and Nahr Aber Zabura to Muchalid is a distance of three and half hours; from that point it is six

hours to Jaffa, the road passing Arsuf and el-Aujeh. This was the time taken by Wildenbruch. Dr. Smith travelled in company with ladies, and more leisurely, taking thirteen hours for the ride."—*Ritter's Geography of Palestine*, vol. iv. p. 269. This distance is more than an ordinary day's journey. Thus *Irby and Mangles (Travels in Syria, &c., p. 188-9)*, who travelled along the same road, say, "October 15 we left Jaffa. Our road lay along the sea-beach. We shortly crossed the Nahr El Petras. In the afternoon we passed through a wild but pretty country, and crossed the Nahr Arsouf, leaving the village of this name (the ancient Apollonias) on our left. The following morning we proceeded very early, and crossing the Nahr El Kasab arrived at Cæsarea."

that the message of the angel was from God. In all this we see proofs of the earnestness, the humility, and the faith of Cornelius.

Hofmeister.

Acts xl. 5.

(9) *On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: (10) And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,*

Deut. xxi. 8.

Hackett.

Bengel.

Hammond.

Peter went up upon the house-top—upon the flat roof of the house built, as such houses are, according to the command of Moses, with high battlements which sheltered the worshippers from observation.¹ It would seem that the house of the tanner had no guest-chamber, no upper-room, it was on the house-top that the Apostle went to pray. The Jewish worshipper was wont to go up to this upper-room, or to the roof of the house, in order that he might offer up his prayers with his face directed towards God's temple at Jerusalem.

Matt. vi. 6.
Lorinus.

Gen. xxiv. 63.

Gen. xxxii.
24.Exod. iii. 1—
ii.1 Kings xix.
4—18.

Peter withdrew himself that he might be more undisturbed in his prayer, and that he might meditate on the house-top with less distraction than elsewhere.² In this he obeys the spirit of the direction of his Divine Master—*When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.* We have examples of God's saints under the old covenant doing the same; thus of Isaac we read that *he went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.* It was when Jacob was left alone that he received the blessing from the mysterious stranger who *wrestled with him.* It was in the desert that Moses received the commission to be the deliverer of God's people from Egypt. It was in *the wilderness* that God specially revealed Himself to Elijah. And this practice of His servants in withdrawing themselves from the crowd and bustle of the world received the sanction of our Lord's own example, who, not for Himself, but for us, withdrew even from the

¹ *δῶμα* was the flat roof, much frequented in the East for purposes of exercise (2 Sam. xi. 2; Dan. iv. 27, marg.),—of sleeping in summer (1 Sam. ix. 26, by inference and as expressed in LXX),—of conversation (ib. ver. 25),—of mourning (Isa. xv. 3; Jer. xlviii. 38),—of erecting booths at the feast of tabernacles (Neh. viii. 16),—of other religious celebrations (2 Kings xxiii.

12; Jer. xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5),—of publicity (2 Sam. xvi. 22; Matt. x. 27; Luke xii. 3; Joseph. Bell. Jud. ii. 21, 5),—of observation (Judg. xvi. 27; Isa. xxii. 1),—and for any process requiring fresh air and sun (Josh. ii. 6).”—*Winer, Realw. in Alford.*

² *“Oratio quietem et silentium amat, turbam et tumultum fugit.”*

company of His chosen Apostles, and so *continued all night in prayer to God.* Luke vi. 12.

God doeth no great thing usually, but by means of prayer, Baxter.
at least He accepteth no other.

While they made ready he fell into a trance,¹ was rapt, Lienard.
that is, in ecstasy.

He fell into, or rather it fell upon him (ἐγένετο ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔκστασις), it was sent from above, and fell from heaven upon him. This was a sudden and overpowering influence of the Spirit; a state of unconsciousness as to the impressions made upon the senses, and of entire abstraction from what was going on in the world around him, during which time there are present to the soul clear visions of heavenly realities.² It was in such an ecstasy or trance that Abraham was plunged (ἐκστασις ἐπέπεσε τῷ Ἀβραμ), when the future history of his children was made known to him by God. And in such a state some of the most important revelations were made known to St. Paul.

LXX version.
Gen. xv. 12—
21.

Acts xxii. 17.
2 Cor. xii. 2.
Cook.

(11) *And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners,³ and let down to the earth:* (12) *Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.* Acts vii. 56.
Rev. xix. 11.

Some commentators have supposed that this vision of a certain vessel (σκεῦος τι = apparatus or arrangement) was sent not so much for the direction of St. Peter as in order to vindicate him in the eyes of others for his admission of Gentiles into the Church of Christ without their having passed through the door of Judaism. This, however, is hardly consistent with this narrative of the revelation and with the disinclination for awhile of St. Peter to act upon it.

Chrysostom.
Etius.

¹ "τί ἐστιν ἔκστασις; μᾶλλον πνευματική τις ὥσαντι θεωρία γέγονεν ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος ὥσαντι εἰποι τις, ἐξίστη ἡ ψυχὴ."—Catena. "Ἐκστασις Iæc vox, hoc loco, constitutionem hominis extra se rapti, significat."—Grotius. "The word in the New Testament signifies sometimes amazement and astonishment, from fear or wonder, Mark v. 42, and xvi. 8; Luke . 26; Acts iii. 10; and sometimes a trance or ecstasy, when the outward senses being bound up as it were with sleep, God's will is inwardly revealed

to the understanding by way of intellectual vision."—Hammond.

² "August. concione iii. in Psalm ciii. facta est illi mentis alienatio, id est, aversa est mens ejus à consuetudine corporali ad visum quemdam contemplandum alienum à præsentibus."—Etius.

³ "'Ἀρχὴ does not mean the corner or square, but the end of something long. The words mean that the sheet was fastened to the ends of four ropes, the ends only appearing in the vision."—Humphrey.

He *saw* in this ecstasy or *trance*—seeing with the mind and hearing mentally, not through the medium of the bodily senses, but by the eyes and means of the Spirit. The medium of revelation was different in the case of Peter from that of Cornelius. Cornelius saw, and with the eyes of the body, that which actually happened, the coming of an angel from God; St. Peter saw in mental vision only.

He *saw heaven opened*, an appropriate symbol of a revelation from the other world.¹ And there was let down from heaven *as it had been a great sheet*—the Church of Christ represented by the linen cloth,—which contained within its expanse *all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts*, the emblem of the savage tribes which were to be comprehended within the Church, and to be tamed by the power and influence of the Church; *and creeping things*, serpents and other such creatures, to indicate that God's grace would convert men of the most noxious and hostile natures, changing them into faithful followers of Christ.² And this linen cloth, the emblem of the Church of Christ, was let down from heaven to teach us that the Church is from heaven and not from earth. Akin to this was the vision of St. John, in which he *saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*.³

By *all manner* (πάντα) many commentators suppose that the *great sheet* contained clean and unclean beasts. Others, however, understand that only unclean beasts were enclosed in this sheet, and it would seem from Peter's words, *Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean*, that this latter were the truer interpretation. To ground the former interpretation on the words *all manner* (πάντα τὰ) seems unduly to press the rigid meaning of these words, since *all manner* only implies *all* to which the narrative refers, which is clearly of unclean beasts.⁴ * These

¹ "*Apertum*—non reseratione elementi sed revelatione spirituali."—*Gorranus*. "*Cœlorum apertio in scripturis nil aliud est quàm aptior aliqua divinæ voluntatis aut majestatis revelatio. Sic Christus dicit: Videbitis cœlos apertos* [Ioan. i. 51], hoc est, clarius cognoscetis Dei opera in Me."—*Ferus*.

² "*Serpentium et ferarum figurâ peccatores significantur; ut intelligeremus, hominem, pravis imbutum moribus, vix hominis nomen mereri et bestiis ferisque comparari posse, posse parari.*"—*Novarinus*.

³ "It was a linen sheet, which very linen showed they were all clean; for in linen the Jews wrapped the first-born of their clean beasts, if any happened to die before they came to be offered, and so buried it; but at no hand, any unclean beasts in linen. But now in linen all; that if one clean, all; and so no person, calling, country, excepted to or accepted of more than another."—*Andrews' Twelve Sermons on Holy Ghost* (vol. iii. p. 332. Ang. Cath. edit.).

⁴ "*Scriptura sæpe cùm de omnibus*

Beelen.
Lienard.

Alford.

Ferus.

Novarinus.

Lorinus.

Rev. xxi. 2.

Origen.
Jerome.
Lorinus.
Fromond.
Sanchez.

Justinus.

Sanchez.

animals were an image of the people without law, and alien from grace, and abandoned to mere brutal passions—for what is man without the knowledge and the fear of God, but an untamed animal? Those who worshipped the beasts of the field became in some sort partakers of that nature which they worshipped, and the idolaters who bowed down to the brute creation became like these in their nature.

Ferus.

Queesel.

(13) *And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.* (14) *But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.*¹

Lev. xi. 4;
xx. 25.
Deut. xiv. 3,
7.
Ezek. iv. 14.

Peter having gone to the house-top hungry had a vision of things to eat. In this way does God adapt His teaching to the circumstances of our lives, and Divine instruction is engrafted on human infirmities.

Humphrey.

The very words of the command point to their spiritual meaning. The words are, *slay*, as at a sacrifice, and *eat*, as the priest partakes of that which he has offered up in sacrifice. Peter, however, understood this call, *slay and eat*, as of corporeal eating only, and did not perceive the spiritual meaning of the command from heaven, that he should go forth and prepare the Gentiles to be an offering well pleasing to God.²

Fromond.

Dion. Carth.

It would seem, since this was thrice repeated, that Peter answered thrice to these words, *slay and eat*. We are reminded in this fact of the threefold denial of his Lord, and the threefold forgiveness of Christ declared in His thrice-repeated question, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?* and the thrice-repeated command, *Feed My sheep. Feed My lambs.*³

John xxi. 15.
—17.

agere videatur, de ea tantum provincia aut materia loquitur, de qua sermo est, ut Hieronymus docuit in cap. xiii. Isai. . . De animalibus autem immundis tantum hic videtur inducta visio.” —Sanchez.

“Lucas dixit omne genus, quia promiscue illic diversa genera permixta erant.” —Calvin.

¹ “Commune—id est, immundum, im-purum, profanum. Judæi enim, ne Gentiles offenderent, cibos eorum qui lege Mosaica vetabantur, non vocabant immundos aut profanos, sed communes, quod communiter à quovis Gentili com-di possent. Rabbi Moyses et R. Salomon apud Lyranum tradunt, tem-pore Messie nulla amplius animalia

fore immunda sed omnia mundanda per ipsius legem qua Deus purificavit omnia ea ipso quo legem Mosaicam, certos cibos quasi immundos vetantem, per novam Christi legem nil tale vetantem, abolevit.” —Tirinus.

² “Macta et comede: macta, hoc est, para Domino in sacrificium gratum.” —Craddock.

³ “Per ter: pro fide Trinitatis in quo baptizandæ sunt gentes, quam et baptizandi confitentur interro-gati: ‘credis in Deum Patrem et Filium et Sanctum Spiritum?’ Petrus quoque quia tertiò negavit, Matt. xxvi. 75, trina confessione correxit, Johann. xxi. 15—17.” —Gorranus.

Matt. xv. 11.
Rom. xiv. 14,
17, 20.

(15) *And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.* (16) *This was done thrice : and the vessel was received up again into heaven.*

This was done thrice, that is, the voice spake thrice,¹ to remove all doubt from the mind of Peter, as Pharaoh's dream was doubled to convince him of the certainty of that which was foretold.²

What God hath cleansed—for nothing save what is clean is let down from heaven—that call not thou common. What Christ has redeemed by His blood-shedding, has by that blood been made clean, and has been brought nigh to God, so that no part of the world lies outside the regards of God, and is not called to be partaker of all the benefits of His death. Christ taught the oneness of all men, and the breaking down of the wall which separated between different classes of man, and the equality of all in the eye of God, when he went in and ate *with publicans and sinners*; with *publicans*, those usually of Gentile birth; with *sinners*, who, but for His cleansing grace, were unclean by reason of their past sin. He taught this when, in opposition to Jewish exclusiveness, *He talked with the woman* of Samaria, a circumstance so unusual, so opposed to Jewish practice, that even *His disciples marvelled*; and also he permitted the *woman in the city, which was a sinner*, to come near to Him and to *wash His feet with her tears*. And that which He taught by His example, that Jew and Gentile were called into His fold, and were sent to work in His vineyard, and that the unclean of every nation were cleansed by His death, were truths taught by all His Apostles, and became notes of

¹ “*τοῦτο* refers to the repetition of the voice, not to the vision as seen three times. The command was reiterated in order to confirm the words more deeply on the mind of Peter.”—*Hackett*.

This is not the usual interpretation of these words, though it is as consonant to the text as the more common one, that it was the sheet which was thrice drawn up.

² “Lorsque Dieu veut marquer qu'un songe est envoyé de sa part, et qu'il est significatif, il le représente d'ordinaire plus d'une fois. Daniel (vii. viii. x. xi.) a vu plusieurs fois sous différentes figures le sort des

quatre monarchies. Pharaon vit premièrement sous la représentation de sept épis, et ensuite sous celle de sept bœufs, ce qui devait arriver à l'Egypte: et Joseph déclare à ce prince que la seconde vision est une confirmation de la première (Gen. xli. 1, 2, et seq. 32). Nabuchodonosor vit une grande statue et un grand arbre, qui ne signifiaient que la destinée de son empire (Dan. i. 11 et iv). Ici Dieu fait voir à Sainte Pierre trois fois le même linge, qui descend du ciel en sa présence, afin que cette vision s'imprime fortement dans son esprit, et qu'il ne la regarde pas comme une simple imagination.”—*Calmet*.

gladness to the Gentile world, telling them that they also were called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.¹ God's will as made known by the Apostles was *that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, so that having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.*

Eph. i. 10.
Col. i. 20.
Alford.

The practical teaching, then, to Peter by means of this trance was—

(1) That the ceremonial law of Moses was abrogated, which had distinguished between the clean and the unclean.

(2) That the Gentiles, as Gentiles, were capable of the grace of salvation, and of baptism, as fully as the Jews. Lienard.

The vessel was received up again into heaven. Thus showing that the work of calling in the Gentiles to the fold of God was by His appointment, and that these when cleansed by the means which He has given have heaven opened to them, and will be received into the company of the faithful glorified.² Sylveira.

Let Christians learn from this revelation to St. Peter the sinfulness of despising any, however sordid their condition, however humble their lot, however sinful their lives; seeing that God cares for them, that God bears with them, that God provides for them, and will receive all those who turn to Him. Sanchez.

(17) *Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,*
(18) *And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.*

Behold—not by chance, but by Divine providence, in order to unfold the meaning of *the vision*,³ of which St. Peter still *doubted in himself.* In this vision, and in the

¹ "Nunc Christi tempore nihil im-mundum est, Deus cuncta mundavit: quisquis ergo priorem vitam depositurus accedit, suscipiendus est."—*Salmeron.*

² "The vessel was received up again into heaven—to show that in the end of the world the whole Church militant shall be transported into heaven, and shall become triumphant."—*Leigh.*

"L'Eglise tire son origine du ciel et retournera au ciel pour lequel elle

est faite. Elle n'est sur la terre que pour être purifiée et renduë digne d'être reçuë de son époux."—*Quesnel.*

³ "Opapa. Vision. Les Visions sont, ou des peintures des choses gravées dans l'imagination, ou des choses que les sens apperçoivent, mais qui n'ont point de réalité et qui ne sont point ce qu'elles paroissent: ce sont des apparences [Apoc. ix. 17. Tobit xii. 20]." —*Bräusobre.*

after coming of the men to declare the message of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit works according to the method of the Divine economy. Moving suddenly, but not instructing suddenly; making known His will, and then step by step guiding man, whether through the intellect or no, to the full perception and acknowledgment of the intentions of God.¹

Lorinus.

Acts xi. 12;
xv. 7.

(19) *While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.* (20) *Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.*

Estius.

Sylvester.

Those who think that the vision was rather for the instruction of others than of the Apostle himself, think that he *doubted* because he feared the misconception of others, and hesitated,² since he knew how greatly the invitation to the Gentiles would be objected to by many of the brethren, and how much they would resent the admission of the uncircumcised into the Church of Christ. This, however, seems alien to the whole of the narrative. It was Peter who doubted, or hesitated; Peter who required to be enlightened, and to be commanded to do the bidding of God, *doubting nothing*.³

Sulmeron.

Behold—as though in this the Holy Spirit should say—The meaning and interpretation of the *vision* on which thou thinkest is made clear by this, that *three men seek thee*: with a message from heaven.⁴ Thou hast seen the *sheet* with all manner of animals let down from heaven, now then *arise* from prayer and meditation, and go forth and do as thou hast seen, not calling those to whom thou art sent *common or unclean*. *The Spirit* calls the Apostle from prayer and meditation to action. The contemplative life is but the preparation for the active, as the active is

¹ "Spiritus Sanctus sensim per occasiones et eventus, more humano voluit docere Petrum et Apostolos. Vult enim ecclesiam imitari puerum Jesum, qui ætate crescebat et sapientia, ait Hilarius."—*Corn. à Lapide*.

² "Dum intra se hæsitaret Petrus quidnam esset visio quam vidisset."—*Vulgate*.

"Dum hæsitabundus secum expendit, quid sibi vellet visio somnium ne esset an significatio divinæ voluntatis."—*Erasmus in Paraph.*

³ "Petrus hæsitat sciens quòd Deus nonnunquam per corporalia ostendit spiritualia."—*Ferus*.

⁴ "Interpretatio est visionis admodum congrua, quasi diceret: Vidisti triplicia animalia ad te delapsa. Ecce tres viri querunt te. Audisti vocem, macta, manduca, etc., hoc est surge, descende, vade cum eis, nauseam habuisti ab animalibus, nunc nihil dubita, ipsos enim misi, imparti Gentibus gratiam Evangelii, ex me enim institutum est, quod suscipis."—*Ferus*.

strengthened by solitude and contemplation.¹ The man of God needs both, and either without the other is a maimed and imperfect life. Dion. Carth.

The Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, by internal inspiration, bids the Apostle go, *doubting nothing*, that the truth refigured by the ark of Noah, into which all manner of animals, clean and unclean, alike were gathered in, was now fulfilled in Christ, and in the ark of His Church, and that the animals then saved were the symbols of the tribes of men who should hereafter be saved in this the true ark of God. He bids him go, *doubting nothing*, because He who sent the men to seek Peter was the same who sent the apostles on their errand to convert the world. Augustine.
Corn. à Lap.

What was said to St. Peter is still said to those whom the Holy Spirit sends forth to rebuke, to exhort, and to teach, *Go, doubting nothing*, for I am with thee; stay not from fear of men; fear not though men resist and revile the word which thou teachest: thou shalt indeed find many adversaries, but go on thine errand *doubting nothing*, for I am with thee. Ferus.

(21) *Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?*² (22) *And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee unto his house, and to hear words of thee.* Acts xxii. 12.

They commend their master as a *just man*,³ as righteous, upright in all his dealings with men, and not only as a devout man towards God, *one that feareth God*, but also as a man of good report among . . . the Jews, which, on account of the exclusiveness of the Jews and their contempt for the Gentiles, is mentioned as though the more remarkable. His last was, indeed, a great proof of the goodness of Cornelius. He had obtained the respect not only of his Lienard.
Sylveira.

¹ "Surge ab oratione, in qua ferus exultat: sæpe oratio omittenda, vel propter officia, vel ob propriam obligationem; sic et Moysi cum esset in monte cum Deo dictum est: *Descende, vocavit populus tuus.* Exod. xxxii."—*Sylveira*.

² "Dieu ne donne sa lumière qu'avec mesure et par degrez, pour tenir

l'homme dans la dépendance. Il faut travailler à avancer dans la connoissance de sa volonté, pour agir à proportion."—*Quesnel*.

³ "Instead of εὐσεβής (ver. 2), δίκαιος here stands; a quality concerning which the subordinates of a man would have most experience."—*Lechler*.

household servants, but also of those to whom he came as the symbol of national subjection.

The Holy Spirit had declared of these men, *I have sent them*; they who had received the message from their master speaks of Cornelius having sent them, when warned by the Spirit so to do. He it is who truly sends when He commissions men to send forth other men on His errand. And these men came because Cornelius desired to hear words from St. Peter, that is, the words of life and of eternal salvation. In this way does St. Paul speak of the word of faith, the word of reconciliation, as the word, and speaks of himself as bold to speak the word without fear; and he commends St. Timothy as one nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine; and in the same way the word writings, the Scriptures, have come to be limited to, and mean, the Gospel of Christ, as with us the book (*the Bible*) means the book of God's revealed will.

Acts xi. 12. (23) Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them,¹ and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

How completely all things were in the first days of the Church regarded as common to the brethren is shown in the fact that St. Peter, though only the guest of Simon, was yet able to receive and entertain these messengers who had been sent by Cornelius. Now also we may discern the first-fruits of that which was taught him in his trance, he called them in and lodged them, though they were heathen, those whom just before he had spoken of as common and unclean, and whom he had been instructed no longer to regard as either, because Christ by His death had cleansed them.

Certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. Six brethren, as St. Peter elsewhere says, who should be witnesses with him of the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit upon Cornelius and his household, and should be able to testify to the Church that God had given to the Gentiles the same outward tokens of His inward abiding as He had given to the Jews.

¹ "Petrus homines ad se à Deo missos, comiter et urbanè excepit et hospitandi gratia, nec se maculari existimavit commercio ethnicorum, quos Deus ad se miserat et quos purificaverat: nec mora, sequenti die protectus est cum eis, comitantibus illum

tanquam pastorem et pontificem nonnullis ex his, qui crediderant in Joppe ad secunda die à protectione pervenerunt Cæsaream. Nam etsi illud equitans uno die emetiri possit; tamen Petrus Apostolus pedibus iter conficiens, duobus venit."—*Salmeron.*

(24) *And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.*

(25) *And as Peter was coming in,¹ Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.*

Cornelius waited for them—desiring, longing, and expecting that gift which God would give by the hands of Peter. In his faith he doubted not but that He who had before sent His angel was now about to give to him some spiritual gift, and he is so free from doubt that even before the coming of Peter he had *called together his kinsmen* and those who were *near* to him, the attendants who were about his person, that they too should be witnesses of God's mercy and be sharers with him in His gifts. In this we have a mark of that *piety* and love for others for which he had been before commended. He cared not only for the temporal benefit, but also for the spiritual good of those who were within his influence, and is eager that they should be partakers with him of this gift of God's love. Fromond.
Ferus.

He fell at his feet, acknowledging and reverencing him as the messenger of God.² Beelen.

In the coming of Peter to Cornelius let all teachers and ministers of God learn one lesson. They are sent not only to the many, but also to the few, not merely to all who seek or require to know the way of truth in the mass and desire to be instructed in God's will, but to every soul. In the spirit of this commission Peter went to this one man. When he arrived at Cæsarea he proceeded to unfold the meaning of the gospel, and to declare the truth which is in Jesus, all the truths of His incarnation and death, to the Jews who were assembled with Cornelius, as earnestly, as carefully, as he had before done to the multitude who

¹ ὡς ἐγένετο τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν—"It has been alleged by some (e.g. Meyer) that the use of τοῦ before an infinitive is unauthorized, and is a grammatical error, incapable of analysis, and is to be ascribed to an oversight of the writer, either in composition or transcription. But it is not without example. See Luke xvii. 1, ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστι τοῦ μὴ ἔλθειν σκάνδαλα. And these two remarkable instances of this construction connect the author of the third Gospel with the writer of the ACTS. VOL. I.

Acts. And thus the rarity of the combination has its use in supplying evidence to the student of Scripture."—Wordsworth.

² προσεκύνησεν — "It was not a Roman custom to offer the salaam to any man. Cornelius, therefore, prostrated himself as to a superhuman visitor. The same homage from an Oriental would not have meant the same thing: it would probably have been declined by Peter, but not in the same language."—Humphrey.

Corn. à Lap.
Acts v. 20.

thronged the temple to hear the gospel message, and to know the words of this life.¹

Acts xiv. 14,
15.
Rev. xix. 10;
xxii. 9.

(26) *But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.*

Patritius.

Chrysostom.

This seems not to have been an act of religious adoration, since Cornelius was a worshipper of God, and knew that in sending for Peter he sent but for a man, the minister of God. Yet it was an act of highest reverence and respect, offered to one very highly exalted on account of the message which he bore and the God whom he served. Such lowly reverence was alien from the practice of the Roman, though common to Eastern nations, amongst whom Cornelius was serving, and from whom he probably had learned the outward token of reverence. In his humility, however, Peter forbade this mark of respect because not due to him. In doing so he taught us all not so to regard the Apostles even of Christ as to bestow on them that regard and worship which is only due to Christ their Master.

Bengal.

Dan. iv. 31.

Acts xii. 22,
23.
Lorinus.

The text does not say that Cornelius *worshipped* him, but only that he worshipped. It may be that looking beyond Peter he did but worship God, falling down before the servant, but adoring the Master. Even this, however, Peter refused to permit, since he himself was but a man. It was a want of this humility, it was the accepting worship and adulation from men, which was punished in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, by his being for a time deprived of his throne. Because he was puffed up by the extreme reverence shown him, therefore the voice came, *The kingdom is departed from thee*, and the decree went forth that he should be driven from among men. Because Herod accepted the worship of the people who proclaimed his voice to be *the voice of a God, and not of a man*,² and because he gave not God the glory, therefore was he destroyed, and at once gave up the ghost in the midst of the impious flatteries of his courtiers.

¹ "Notent sic concionatores, doctores et similes, se non debere spectare copiam et nobilitatem auditorum, sed eâdem alacritate adire et docere paucos et multos, rusticos ac nobiles, barbaros ac civiles . . . Non cessat fons aquam eâdem copiâ emanare, etiamsi nemo hauriat, et tu eodem spiritu eructa verbum Dei, esto pauci audiant."—Corn. à Lapide.

² "Constitutus, inquit David, legis-

latorem super eos, ut sciant Gentes, quoniam homines sunt [Ps. ix. 21]. Ubi est Hebræum nomen *אנוש* *enosch*, quod significat miserum et æurnnosum, laboribus, et miseriis obnoxium. Basilii congerit modestiæ Christianæ exempla, quibus doceat non patiendum ut nobis præter modum honos habeatur. In his et hoc Petri affert, et contrarium illud Herodis."—Lorinus.

Let us note that though Peter is held up to commendation for his refusal to accept such honour from Cornelius, yet we do not read that Christ refused any act of worship, reverence, or adoration. Men and angels turn from such acts because not due to them. Paul and Barnabas, when the people of Iconia would have offered sacrifices to them as to gods, *rent their clothes*, and almost in the words of Peter declared, *we are men of like passions with you*. And when John at Patmos saw an angel stand before him and *fell at his feet to worship him*, he was forbidden in these words, *See thou do not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God*. But to Christ such honour and worship was due, and was therefore accepted, for He was not merely man, but Incarnate God, whom we are bidden to worship.

Acts xiv. 14,
15.

Rev. xix. 10.

Hackett.

(27) *And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.* (28) *And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing (ἀθεμιτον)¹ for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

John iv. 9;
xviii. 28.
Acts xi. 3;
xv. 8, 9.
Gal. ii. 12, 14.
Eph. iii. 6.

Ye who by long residence in the midst of the Jews have learnt their customs and know their exclusiveness, ye know that it is esteemed an unlawful thing for one to come into the company and to share in the hospitality of those of another nation. To do so was unlawful not, however, by any direct command of God, but by the glosses of the Rabbins.² They had, indeed, been forbidden to hold intercourse with the people of the land, and to contract marriages with them, lest they should by such ties be drawn away to the idolatries of the people of Canaan—a danger which was no imaginary one, as the cases of Ahab and Solomon and others prove; but at this special prohibition the teachers of the Jews had extended so as to exclude every Gentile nation from all domestic commerce and relations.

Beelen.

Patritius.

Keuchner.

¹ ἀθεμιτον, unlawful—"No one of the New Testament writers uses the word, except Peter here and in 1 Pet. 3."—Hackett.

² "Vocem ἀθεμιτον habes 2 Macc. 15 et vii. 7. Respondet Rabbinico, illicitum, non lege Mosis, sed decreto sapientum, quod pari loco cum

Lege habebatur. Sed præterquam quod Deus non talium tantum decretorum sed et suæ Legis est Dominus, cessabat hic ratio decreti. Decretum factum erat contra idololatrias malæque vitæ homines, qualis non erat Cornelius."—Grotius.

(29) *Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying,¹ as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?*

Whatever St. Peter may have learnt from the report of the messengers sent by Cornelius, he desires now to know from Cornelius himself what was his object in sending to Joppa. In part he no doubt required to be fully informed of his wishes, but beyond this there seem two reasons for this question:—

Hugo de S.
Charo.
Menochius.

(1) He desired to hear from the lips of Cornelius the confession of his creed, not, indeed, so much for his own enlightenment as for the sake of Cornelius himself.²

Gangæus.

(2) In order that all whom Cornelius had assembled in his house, and the brethren who had accompanied the Apostle from Joppa, might learn from the lips of Cornelius his wishes and the commands of the angel.

Matt. xxviii.
3.
Mark xvi. 5.
Luke xxiv. 4.
Acts i. 10.
Dan. x. 12.
Heb. vi. 10.

(30) *And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; ³ and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, (31) And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.*

Four days ago I was fasting. These words have been variously understood. They have been interpreted to mean, I had fasted for four days when the angel came; or, I began to fast four days ago when the angel appeared to me, and I have fasted whilst my messengers were going and returning from Joppa until now, *the ninth hour*⁴ of the fourth day. Both these interpretations, however, are attended with difficulties of construction, and the more usual interpretation is, *Four days ago I was fasting until this very hour of the day at which we are now assembled.*⁵ If the second inter-

Euthymius.
Dion. Carth.

Corn. & Lap.
Lorinus.
Whitby.

¹ ἀναντιρρήτως = ἀναμφιβόλως, without delay—*Heysehins*. Without gainsaying—"sine dubitatione. Syrus ܠܐ ܠܝܗܬܝܗܬܝܕܐ ܝܬܗ, id est, promptè, seu expeditè. Adverbium Græcum significat, *citra contradictionem*."—*Lorinus*.

² "Ἦδη τὸ πᾶν ὁ Πέτρος ἤκουσε καὶ παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν, ἀλλὰ πρῶτον βούλεται αὐτοὺς ὁμολογήσαι, καὶ ὑπευθύνους ποιῆσαι τῇ πίστει· ἤκουσε γὰρ παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν."—*Chrysostom*,

³ *I was fasting until this hour, and*—these words are wanting in A¹.B.C. & p. vulg. copt. æth. arm. Bedæ codd. lat. Chrysost. ut videtur in comment., but inserted in A².D.E.H. (L) P. 13, 36 rel. syrr. sab. Thl. *Mill. Griesbach. Alford*.

⁴ "Quo tempore Dominus Ipse, quem rogabat, pro totius mundi salute extensis in cruce manibus orabat."—*Bede*.

⁵ "Et Cornelius ait: a nudius-

retation were correct, Cornelius must have said I am, not *was fasting*.¹

Behold, a man stood before me—as we have been already told, *an angel of God*, appearing as a man. In the same way Daniel speaks of the angel Gabriel who appeared to him as *the man Gabriel*, not meaning that he was not an angel, but that he appeared in manly form. And the angel comforted Cornelius with the declaration that his *prayer*, his perseverance in praying, was noted, and that God, who has said that *he who merely giveth a cup of cold water in His name in no wise shall lose his reward*, had rewarded the *alms* of Cornelius with the highest gift of His grace, by calling him into His fold.

Dan. ix. 21.

Patritius.

Novarinus.

Matt. x. 42.

Hurs.

(32) *Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.* (33) *Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*

Thou hast well done—thou hast courteously done according to my wish. The words contain the customary compliments for such courtesy.³ *Therefore are we all here present before God*, who has so ordered all things by His providence that thou art come. *Before God*, who knows the heart of man, and sees the sincerity of our desires to be taught the

Grotius.

*arta die usque ad hanc horam orans
am horâ nonâ in domo mea.*—*Vulgate.*

“Alors Corneille luy dit: Il y a maintenant quatre jours [qu’estant à n] je me mis ex priere dans ma maison à la neuvième heure.”—*Monsieur de Sion.*

“Il y a maintenant quatre jours que estant mis en priere dans ma maison à neuvième heure.”—*De Saci.*

“Sensus clarus est hic, q. d. Quarto die eram jejunans usque ad hanc horam vespertinam, quando more orans horâ nonâ, vidi angelum . . . m orans horâ usque ad hanc horam vespertinam videtur enim Petrus pere pervenisse Joppen.”—*Corn. de Jopide.*

² “Quiconque fait misericorde aux hommes, la recevra de Dieu. Le don qui Dieu reçoit par la main du pauvre, ne peut être oublié: Pour le bien faire, il faut avoir reçu de Dieu le don de la charité plus précieux que tous les trésors de la terre. Si cela n’était pas vrai dans Corneille même avant son baptême, il auroit eu de quoy se glorifier. Sa priere a été exaucée; mais elle avoit été précédée d’une foi qu’il, n’avoit ni demandée, ni meritée.”—*Quesnel.*

³ “Καλῶς—an expression of thanks, as benignè, apud Horatium. Thus Phil. iv. 14; 3 John 6, and the classical Greek, Grotius.”—*Elsley.* “Fecisti, inquit, καλῶς, id est, ut ingenuum, atque liberalem hominem decet.”—*Sanchez.*

Rosenmüller. more perfect way. And we are *here present before God* in order that we may *hear all things that are commanded thee of God*—to hear, that is, in the sense of obeying. We are here ready and desirous of obeying *all things*, not a part only of His will, but all the commandments of God. What Cornelius here proffers is, unreserved submission to the will of God.¹

Deut. x. 17.
2 Chron. xix.
7.
Job xxxiv.
19.

Rom. ii. 11.
Gal. ii. 6.
Eph. vi. 9.
Col. iii. 25.
1 Pet. i. 17.

(34) *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth² I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:*

Matt. v. 3.

Lorinus.
Tholuck.

Gorranus.

Bengel.

Hugo de S.
Chiaro.

John xvi. 13.

Hardouin.
Mark xvi.
15.

This phrase—*opened his mouth*—is used in Holy Scripture as in classical authors on solemn occasions, when some great truth is about to be uttered by the speaker,³ as when our Blessed Lord was about, on the Mount of Beatitude, to preach to His disciples and the multitude. Here we have the solemn recognition by St. Peter that the Gentiles were fellow-heirs with the Jews in the promises of the Gospel, and *that God is no respecter of persons*; and hence the ushering in of these truths by the words, he *opened his mouth, and said,*

Of a truth. Not now in vision only, but by the visible work of God in leading Cornelius and those who were present with him to seek admission into the Church of Christ. That which had been before declared in words, and was hard of comprehension even by the Apostles of our Lord, is now made clear to the mind of St. Peter, and he is convinced experimentally that to the Gentiles also was the great salvation sent. This was a truth which the Apostles did not clearly perceive until the coming of the Spirit, who led them *into this truth.* It is true, indeed, that Christ had declared this, both in His parables and by His direct teaching: they were, however, slow of understanding, until first the vision sent to St. Peter, and the work of the Spirit upon Cornelius, gave force and meaning to the words which they had formerly heard from the lips of their Master, and that which had before been commanded by Christ, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*, had been confirmed by the vision, and by the preparation of heart evidenced in

¹ ὅρα ὅση πίστις· ὅρα ὅση εὐλάβεια . . . οὐχὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ· οὕτω δὲ προσέχειν τοῖς τοῦ Θεοῦ δούλοις· εἶδετε διάνοιαν διεγερμένην· εἶδετε πῶς ἄξιος ἦν πάντων τούτων.”—Chrysostom.

² “Possemus præterea dicere dictionis, in veritate, continere formam asseverationis atque etiam juramenti, sicut interdum verè; est enim sæpe pro his in textu Hebræo vox aliqua

à rudice ἄμα aman, quod est, fidelem esse, stabilem, veracem, constantem in dictis promissisque: unde amen, quod idem valet, atque τὸ γένοιτο, ita fiat, vel esto, firmum, fixum, immutabile, estque aliquando juramenti forma.”—Lorinus.

³ “Tunc etiam fatis aperit Cassandra futuris ora.”

Virg. Æn., lib. ii. 246.

these Gentile converts.¹ So that, in the words of a great father of the Church, St. Peter was called from Joppa, and was now at the house of Cornelius, in order not only that he might teach the leading facts of the Gospel to these Gentiles, but that he himself might be taught this lesson, *that God is no respecter of persons.* Sanctius.
Chrysostom.

The Jews had long rested in the knowledge that they were heirs of the kingdom as the descendants of Abraham after the flesh, and the first converts to Christianity out of the nation of the Jews believed that they alone were called to this privilege, or at least that those who should be admitted to share in the blessings of which they were partakers must be first incorporated into and be made members of the family of Israel by the rite of circumcision. This belief was strong in the minds of even the Apostles of Christ, and was only slowly eradicated. This belief is rebuked in these solemn words of the Apostle, *God is no respecter of persons*, since men of all nations are equally invited to enter into His kingdom, and all who do His will are accepted by Him.² Cook.
Alford.

In this speech of St. Peter we may note the order of the topics introduced. After the assertion of the great principle *that God is no respecter of persons*, he sums up briefly the truths of Christianity, very much in the order of the Creed; thus teaching Cornelius that in which his faith was as yet defective, the great objective truths concerning the nature and mission of Christ.³ First, then, he speaks of the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah sent from God to reconcile the world to Him. This mission He attested by miracles, in which He healed *all that were oppressed of the devil*. The lesson of His life and of His death, *whom they slew and hanged on a tree*, is next set before the Gentile inquirers; the evidences of His resurrection on *the third day* are given by the *witnesses chosen of God* for this purpose; and the whole is enforced by the warning that it is *He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead*, and that He who shall so judge the world commanded the Apostles *to preach unto the people, and to testify to mankind this truth*. And that the evidence of all these facts Bede.
Boys.

¹ "In veritate—non tantum in visione, sed manifestis signis narrante Cornelio quod sibi acciderat."—Hugo de S. Charo. "In veritate comperi, id est verè et experimentaliter nunc cognovi."—Dion. Carthusianus. "Ubi nimis est fictio, non est Deus, non est spiritus Sanctus. Legitur enim quia spiritus Sanctus discipline effugiet cunctum [Lap. 1, 5]."—Pet. Polessensis.

² "Non indifferentismus religionum, sed indifferentia nationum, hic assertitur."—Bengel.

³ "τρανὺς σημαίνει ὅτι ὃν πρότερον θεὸν ἐφοβεῖτο ὁ Κορνήλιος, τὸν διὰ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν κατηχεῖτο, δι' ὧν καὶ τὰς ἐλεημοσύνας ἐποίει, οὗτος ἐπ' ἀληθείας ἐστὶ Θεός· ἔλειπε δὲ αὐτῷ ἡ τοῦ Υἱοῦ γνώσις."—Ignatius, Cont. Hæres., Lib. iii. c. 12, § 7.

did not depend merely upon the testimony of the Apostles, of the disciples, and of the multitudes who had witnessed the mighty acts done by our Lord, is shown by St. Peter in that other proof which he then adduces of the truth of Christ's Messiahship, *to Him gave all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.*

*God is no respecter of persons.*¹ The ministers of God are called upon to imitate their Master in this particular, and to have no respect of persons. They are bidden to minister alike to the wants of all who need spiritual assistance, without distinction of rank or of person. Every soul which God has made will be alike dear to him who is the faithful minister of God.

Quesnel.

(35) *But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted (δεκτός)² with Him.*

Acts xv. 9.
Rom. ii. 13,
27; iii. 22,
29; x. 12,
13.
1 Cor. xii.
13.
Gal. iii. 28.
Eph. ii. 13,
18; iii. 6.

Bengel.

In every nation. Here is no support, as some have fancied, for the notion that all religions are indifferent, and that all are equally acceptable. The declaration is that *in every nation*—not in every form of religious worship—he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. This reverential fear and the active doing of righteousness is what God demands from every one of us.³ He who professes to be a member of Christ, and neither possesses this fear nor evidences a like obedience to the commands of God, is not accepted by Him, is not pleasing to Him, and does not that which He approves. Here, in a compendium, is the whole law of God. He calls upon us to serve Him with filial love and with reverential fear; He commands us to worship Him with our whole heart and soul, our will and our affections; He bids us at the same time to work righteousness, that is, to do our duty to our brother by loving, by serving, by benefiting him. Here is the Gospel division

Ferus.

Lorinus.

¹ προσωπολήμπτως, a word unknown in classical Greek, and found only in this passage of the New Testament; it is compounded of λαμβάνειν and πρόσωπον, and was coined to express concretely the idea of προσῶπον; *respecter of persons*. The meaning here is that God has not a more favourable regard to the Jews than to the Gentiles. It was no easy matter for Peter and the Jewish Christians to learn that the distinction between Jews

and Gentiles was now abolished.

² “Δεκτός = πᾶσι from ἵνα *voluntas* (cf. ἀρίσκω, ἀρεστος), to be translated *acceptable*, *capable of being accepted* rather than actually *accepted* (Severian, Caten. p. 173). No one is accepted, except ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, Eph. i. 6 (see Chrys. and others here): cp. Luke iv. 24; Phil. iv. 18; 2 Cor. vi. 2.”—Wordsworth.

³ “Non opus sine timore, nec timor sine opere Deo placet.”—Ferus.

of the Christian's duty both towards God and towards his neighbour,—reverential fear to God and love to man.

Calvin.
Chrysostom.

Righteousness includes—

(1) All virtues, the whole duty of man to man.¹
(2) Specifically, mercy and almsgiving. This seems referred to here: *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.* In which words we may note that *prayers* include the worship, the fear of God, and *alms* the righteousness referred to in this verse. Of the godly man, the man *accepted* by God, we read, *He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor: and his righteousness remaineth for ever.*

Sanctius.
Verse 4.

Ps. cxii. 9.

(36) *The word (λόγος²) which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: he is Lord of all:)*

Is. lvii. 19.
Matt. xxviii.
18.
Rom. x. 12.
1 Cor. xv. 27.
Eph. i. 20,
22; ii. 14,
16, 17.
Col. i. 20.
1 Pet. iii. 22.
Rev. xvii. 4;
xix. 16.
Dion. Carth.
Hugo de S.
Charo.
Lorinus.

The word, or, according to the word; that is, not, as some have supposed, the Incarnate Word (for St. Luke never uses λόγος in this sense), but according to the word preached, or the Gospel. According to the *word*—that is, by those means by which God preached or declared peace. *By the mouth of Jesus Christ*: not by the mouth of a mere human and therefore fallible messenger, but by His teaching who is the Eternal Word of the Father. Whilst, then, St. Peter is declaring that Christ is *Lord of all*, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, he at the same time notes that the immediate and direct preaching of Christ was *unto the children of Israel*, who were the covenant and chosen people of God.³

Gorranus.

Chrysostom.

Peace: this *peace*, which was not only declared or preached to the Jews by Jesus Christ, but was procured for all by His life and death,⁴ was—

Patritius.

¹ "Αὕτη μὲν οὖν ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἀρετὴ μὲν ἐστὶ τελεία, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπλῶς ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἕτερον. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πολλοὶς κρατίστη τῶν ἀρετῶν εἶναι καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη, καὶ οὐθ' ἕσπερος οὐθ' ἑῷς οὕτω θαυμαστός· καὶ παρομιμαζόμενοι φάμεν 'ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ ἀλλήλῃ βδην πᾶς ἀρετὴ ἐνι.' καὶ τελεία ἅλιστα ἀρετὴ, ὅτι τῆς τελείας ἀρετῆς ὁμῆσις ἐστίν. τελεία δ' ἐστίν, ὅτι ὁ ὧν αὐτὴν καὶ πρὸς ἕτερον δύναται ὃ ἀρετῇ χρῆσθαι, ἀλλ' οὐ μόνον καθ' ἑαυτὸν."—Aristotle, *Eth. Nicom.*, lib. c. 3 [3rd edit. Bekker].

² "Ῥῆμα means more than λόγος· ὁ λόγος is the *Word*, but ῥῆμα is the

matter or thing declared by the Word (see Luke i. 37, ii. 15); and τὸ ῥῆμα γινόμενον καθ' ὅλης τῆς 'Ιουδαίας is the matter published which came or was proclaimed *through all Jewry*."—Wordsworth.

³ "Verbum quod misit filiis Israël, pacem per Jesum Christum annuncians vos nostis."—Kypke. "It seems simple and suitable to supply κατὰ τὸν λόγον, giving it the meaning 'as respects the word.'"—Stier.

⁴ "Annuncians pacem per Jesum Christum. Non ut hujus pacis nuntius, sed ut auctor atque effector Jesus Christus hic nominatur, sensusque est:

Ferus.

(1) Peace with God, through the cleansing of the conscience by the blood of Christ and by the means of the reconciliation of man to God.

Lorinus.

(2) Peace within, the ceasing of the conflict of earthly passion in the heart of man through the subjugation of the will.

Eph. ii. 14.

Lange.

Prov. xvi. 7.

(3) Peace between man and man, between Jew and Gentile, through the breaking down of *the middle wall of partition* between those who were at enmity one with another; for *when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

And as the gift which was bestowed on man, and made known to the world by the preaching of Christ, was *peace*, so are the means by which this is assured to mankind peaceful means:—

(1) The messengers and ministers of the Gospel are messengers of peace; they were neither Roman centurions nor Roman legions, but Peter and the rest of the company of the disciples.

Gal. v. 22,
23.

(2) The weapons by which this peace is procured are weapons of peace, *gentleness, goodness, meekness*: in this the mildness of the Gospel is contrasted with the stern punitive character of the Mosaic law.

1 Pet. iii. 13.

Rom. viii.
31.

Lange.

And this preacher of peace is *Lord of all*. His sceptre is one of peace, for those who yield obedience to His law will not fear man; for *who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* His sceptre is an almighty sceptre, so that where He bears rule no enemies can hurt; for *if God be for us, who can be against us?*

Luke iv. 14.

(37) *That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;*

Corn. à Lap.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

That word, or report of the teaching and the deeds of Christ, *which was published throughout all Judæa*, is appealed to by St. Peter because it was what they knew.¹ And he then briefly touches upon the main articles of the

Annunciants pacem quæ per Jesum Christum efficeretur.—*Patritius*. “*Illa pax sive reconciliatio intelligatur obtinenda per Jesum Christum, h.e. per ejus merita. Quam interpretationem postulare mihi videtur id quod sequitur: hic est omnium Dominus, h.e. non Judæorum tantum, sed etiam Gentilium, quippe qui suo sanguine tam nos quam illos redemit.*”—*Beelen*.

¹ “Some think that Cornelius was the centurion who was present at the crucifixion of Christ (Matt. xxvii. 54; Mark xv. 39; Luke xxiii. 47), since it was customary to march a portion of the troops at Cæsarea to Jerusalem, for the preservation of order during the festivals. It is impossible to refute or confirm that opinion.”—*Hackett*.

Christian faith, that simple creed which before the growth of heresies was sufficient for Christ's Church.

St. Peter commences from *the baptism* of repentance which John preached, since the foundation and beginning, not only of the Gospel, but of the Divine life in the soul of the sinner, is repentance.¹ He conceals nothing of the ruggedness of the Christian path, nor does he hide the lowliness of the beginnings of the Christian life. The Jew contemned Galilee, and despised the people of that country for their roughness and ignorance; yet it is *from Galilee*, as St. Peter reminds his hearers, that the word of truth was sounded forth.² Afterwards we find him dwelling upon the ignominy of the instrument of Christ's death—the cross. Indeed, in no part of the address is there any trace of a wish to make the truth acceptable to man by concealing those things which were likely to offend the prejudices of men.

Lorinus.

Ferus.

Sanctius.

(38) *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.*

Luke iv. 18.
John iii. 2.
Acts ii. 22;
iv. 27.
Heb. i. 9.

Jesus of Nazareth. Here we have another instance of what has just been mentioned. Nazareth was despised by the Jew, and one of the reproaches cast upon our Blessed Lord was that He was from Nazareth. Yet Peter uses this despised name, and is not afraid to arouse the contempt of his hearers at these several indications of the lowliness of the origin of the Gospel, and of the mean estate of the first converts to Christ.

*How God the Father anointed Jesus of Nazareth.*³ That anointing which priest and prophet and king received was an emblem of the grace conferred upon them to fulfil their office, and was the public declaration of their appointment to the office to which they had been called. What gave power, and singled out the chosen one from amongst his fellows to do God's work, was therefore spoken of as an *anointing*.⁴ Our

¹ "Saint Jean a été le nœud des deux alliances. Où il finit, là Jésus-Christ commence. Il prêche le batême de la pénitence, mais c'est à Jésus-Christ la vérité."—*Quesnel*.

² "In Galilæa, contempta regione, evangelium cœpit, quia à parvis initiis. Huc pertinent parabolæ de grano sinapis et fermento."—*Ferus*.

³ "Unctus est Jesus non oleo visi-

bili, sed dono gratiæ. Ista mystica et invisibili unctione tunc intelligendus est unctus quando Verbum Dei caro factum est, id est, quando humana natura sine ullis præcedentibus bonorum operum meritis Deo Verbo est in utero Virginis copulata, ita ut cum illo fieret una persona."—*Bede*.

⁴ "Gratia Spiritus Sancti sæpe vocatur oleum, quia splendet et calefacit.

Is. lxi. 1.

Luke iv. 21.

Corn. & Lap.

Salméron.

Theophylact.
Menochius.

Corn. & Lap.

Lord received not that anointing in emblem, but directly in the union of the Divine nature with the human, and this, which was the work of the Spirit, was the anointing spoken of in this verse. Of that the prophet spake, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: a prophecy fulfilled, according to our Blessed Lord's own words, in His person and by His mission.*¹

He went about doing good is a short summary of the life of Christ on earth; all His actions were good, and He was untiring in the performance of His deeds of mercy and goodness. And this doing good was evinced in His *healing all that were oppressed of the devil*, either in their bodies or in their souls; in His *healing all diseases and infirmities of the body*, and in forgiving all sins which *oppressed the souls of those who came to Him*.

God was with Him—

(1) With the man Christ Jesus, by means of the hypostatic union of the Divine nature with the human in the one person of the Saviour.

(2) The Father was with the well-beloved Son, by the singular grace and power which He had from Him.

(3) God was ever present in Him who was God and man—the God-man—and the presence of almighty power was made manifest by the working of miracles.²

We have here the three Persons in the ever-blessed

Nam animam splendidam, formosam ac Deo amabilem et charitate flagrantem facit.”—*Fromond*.

¹ “The anointing or pouring oil on the heads of the guests is the highest expression of acknowledging and testifying the greatest joy (and so called the oil of gladness, Ps. xlv. 8) that is to be found among them. This anointing, therefore, from hence came to denote the preferring one before another, and the Targum generally renders it by a word which signifies preferring or advancing, and so became the ceremony of consecrating to any special office, and so was ordinarily used in the installing men to offices of any eminence. From hence, as in many other things, doth the word come to be used metaphorically, for any that is preferred before, or set over others.

Abraham and the patriarchs, that must not be touched, in the Psalmist are called God's anointed, that is, persons by God preferred and advanced before others, taken into His special care, and so signally testified to by God's dealings towards them.”—*Hammond*.

² “It is worthy our remark, that frequently when the Holy Ghost is mentioned, there is added a word particularly adapted to the present circumstance. So the deacons were to be *full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom*, ch. vi. 3. Barnabas was *full of the Holy Ghost and faith*, ch. xi. 24. The Apostles were *filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost*, ch. xiii. 52. And here, when His mighty works are mentioned, Christ Himself is said to be *anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power*.”—*Wesley*.

Trinity, their personal existence and special offices, pointed out by St. Peter: God the Father, who by His presence *anointed* the Divine nature of the Son in that He begat Him; the Eternal Son, co-equal and of one substance with the Father, who in man's nature received and gave the gifts of goodness which He manifested to men; and the Holy Spirit, who anointed or sanctified the human nature of Christ for His work of Redemption.¹

Lorinus.
Sanctius.

(39) *And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:*

Acts ii. 32;
v. 20.

We are witnesses—this was the duty of the Apostles, and that office to which Christ called them, almost in the same words: *Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* And before His crucifixion, when speaking of the witness which the Holy Spirit should bear to Him, He said, *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.*

Acts i. 8.

John xv. 27.
Ferus.

Whom they slew. St. Peter is speaking to Gentiles, and charges upon the Jews the death of Christ. *Whom they slew and hanged on a tree*, he says, not whom they crucified, but he uses the strictly legal expression for this kind of death. In speaking of the opprobrious mode of execution the Apostle shows that he is not ashamed of the cross of Christ; and that, like St. Paul, he glories in that which was a stumbling-stone and an offence to the Jew: *God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Winer.

Salmeron.

Gal. vi. 14.

Every Christian is called upon to be a witness for Christ, and to show forth the power of His resurrection by the lowliness of his temper, by the constancy of his faith, and by the consistency of his life.

Quesnel.

(40) *Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; (41) Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who*

Acts ii. 24.
Luke xxiv.
30, 43.
John xiv. 17,
22; xxi. 13.
Acts xiii. 31.

¹ "Omnis gratia ac virtus Humanitatis communicata est ob unionem Verbi cum illa, nec ulla deinceps facta accessio est gratiæ infusæ, vel scientiæ. Itaque in Baptismo unctio intelligenda erit, quia tunc declarata est et exerceri cæpta et advenit signum visibile columbæ et vox Patris externa, qua veluti

Filium destinabat ad officium doctoris . . . Lege Bellarminum, tom. 1, lib. iii. de Christ., cap. 5, et seq.; et Suarez, tom. 1, de Incar., dist. 7, sect. 3; et Gregorium de Valentia, tom. 4, dist. 1, puncto 2" [see also Bishop Pearson On the Creed, in Art. 2, ad fin.]—*Lorinus.*

*did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.*¹

Him God—that is, either the Father, or the Divinity which was united to the humanity, for this is the same—*raised up*. The body which had been hypostatically united to the Divinity God *raised from the grave and showed Him openly, not to those who would have rejected even this further proof of His almighty power, and therefore of His Divine nature, but unto the Apostles, as witnesses chosen before by Christ to be His companions, to receive His teaching, to see His wonders, and to testify to the reality of His resurrection.* With these *witnesses*, in proof of the reality of His resurrection body, He *did eat and drink . . after He rose from the dead.*²

Matt. xxviii.
19, 20.
John v. 22,
27.
Acts i. 8;
xviii. 31.
Rom. xiv. 9,
10.
2 Cor. v. 10.
2 Tim. iv. 1.
1 Pet. iv. 5.

(42) *And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God*³ *to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

The great, the central truth of which they were to be the witnesses was the resurrection of Christ. On this, as St. Paul declares, depended the whole of Christianity. As Christ Himself told His Apostles, the Father had committed all judgment to Him, and had constituted Him the Judge of quick and dead; that is:—

- (1) The Judge of those who shall be alive when He comes to judgment, and those who shall have died before that time.
- (2) The Judge of those who are alive by their union with

¹ “Vide quàm pulchro ordinè Petrus Cornelium quasi de omnibus fidei nostræ articulis instruat: certè de summis ac præcipuis. Personarum trinitatem in divinis disertis verbis exprimit, nimirum Deum Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum. Deinde incarnationis mysterium attingit, dicens quod Deus unxerit Filium suum Spiritu Sancto. Tertiò addit Christi in terris utilissimam et benignissimam conversationem. Quartò mortem Illius et mortis genus describit. Quintò jam audimus resurrectionem, quam sic adducit et docet ut creditu non sit difficile.”—*Hofmeister.*

² οἱ τινες συνεφάγομεν καὶ συνεπίομεν αὐτῷ—“Ut actione humana et vitali edendo et vibendo Se verum et

vivum hominem esse probaret.”—*Fromond.*

“Pluribus argumentis Se vivum exhibuit post resurrectionem Suam, nam et Se videndum et audiendum et palpandum præbuit: certissimum autem vitæ argumentum vel signum est comedere et bibere, ideo hoc solum commemorat.”—*Ferus.*

³ “Προετιχουρονημεινους—“Vox illa *præordinati* peculiaris est Lucæ. Solus ille, nec sæpius quam ter, hanc ille usurpat: primum hoc loco; deinde Act. xiii. 48; denique Act. xxii. 14. Ubique significat Dei voluntatem alios præ aliis ordinantis sive eligentis ad aliquid insigne et eximium.”—*Hardouin.*

he Life, the just as well as those who are dead in their sins, those whose spiritual life has departed.¹ Corn. & Lap.

He is the Judge of quick and dead. He is ever exercising his office of Judge; for the work of judgment commences now, and the stings and reproaches of conscience are so many anticipations of the general judgment, so many acts of the great Judge which He exercises now, and which will be completed at the great day of judgment. Salmeron.

(43) *To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.*

Is. liii. 11.
Jer. xxxi. 34.
Dan. ix. 24.
Mic. vii. 18.
Zech. xiii. 1.
Mal. iv. 2.
Acts xv. 9;
xxvi. 18,
22.

By this reference to *all the prophets* it would seem that Cornelius and the rest of the company were acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, and had been led on as by the hands of a *schoolmaster* to seek Him to whom they gave such abundant *witness*.² To these inquirers St. Peter here proposes two arguments as proofs of the Divine mission of the Redeemer:—

Rom. x. 11.
Gal. iii. 23.

Cook.

Gal. iii. 24.

(1) The life and deeds of Him who went about doing good; His miracles of healing, done by His own power and His word.

(2) The fulfilment of ancient prophecies by these very acts of the Messiah, since Isaiah and other prophets had expressly declared that He would do these mighty and beneficent works.

Lienard.

Through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. Through His power, by reason of His incarnation, by the virtue of His blood poured out upon the cross; not from any merits in the sinner, but only through His death, and by the sinner's faith in the power of the risen Saviour and in the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice can we receive remission of sins.³ Ferus.

¹ "Judex vivorum et mortuorum, id est, justorum qui vivunt vita gratiæ et iniquorum qui mortui sunt morte culpæ."—*Lyra*.

² Cornelius would most probably have known the chief facts of the life of Jesus. He was stationed at Cæsarea, which, although at that time a Roman city and the residence of the Roman governor, was within the borders of Judæa, and formerly comprised within the kingdom of Herod and of Archelaus. The fame of the miracles

of Jesus must during His life have reached Cæsarea: for although it does not appear that He ever visited that city, yet He could not have been far from it when he came to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Philip the Evangelist also, we know, came to Cæsarea (Acts viii. 40), and, without doubt, carried on his Evangelistic labours in that city.

³ "Fides enim Christi est janua et prima gratia, per quam ad gratiam significantem, et opera vitæ æternæ meritoria intratur."—*Fromond*.

Acts iv. 31;
viii. 15,
16, 17;
xi. 15.
Acts xi. 19.
Gal. iii. 14.

(44) *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.* (45) *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.* (46) *For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,*

In the second chapter of the *Acts* St. Luke gives us an account of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and disciples; here we have the record of the Gentile Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit to the first-fruits of the Gentile world. And this gift would seem now to have been visibly attested by the same token which had been already given to the Apostles, the fiery tongues resting on their heads,¹ since St. Peter, in giving to the assembled Apostles an account of the conversion and baptism of Cornelius, says that *the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning.*²

Whilst Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them. As in the account of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost we are told of the suddenness of the sound from heaven and of the descent of the Spirit, so here, it was whilst the Apostle was speaking that the Holy Spirit fell on these Gentile converts; thus witnessing to the celerity of the Spirit's operations. As that Spirit fell on them whilst they were listening with reverent attention to the words of the Apostle, so will He come to us if only we listen with like reverence and faith. They were listening; they had come desiring to be guided into all truth, and they received the gift which they sought. Then, as now, the Spirit comes not to those who do not desire His sanctifying presence, and who wait not with hearts desiring to be filled with His grace, and are not prepared to follow His guidance.³

Novarinus.

¹ "To fill all heads with the doctrine, and fire all hearts with His love."—Dean Brough.

² "Forte apparuerunt ignitæ linguæ, sicut in die Pentecostes super Apostolorum capitibus."—Hofmeister. Τὸ Πνεῦμα.—"This falling of the Holy Ghost was not properly, or not merely, an infusing of justifying grace, but an infusing of such gifts as might edify others."—Donne, 2nd Sermon, on *Whit-*

Sunday.

³ "Non semel Spiritus Sanctus cecidit, non semel hominibus datus est: nunquam tamen exhibitus otiosis, sed bene occupatis aut in oratione, aut in verbo Dei. Cecidit super Apostolos, dum orationi vacarent; cadit nunc super istos, dum audirent Dei verbum: non reperias faciliè super feriatis aliquos cecidisse."—Novarinus.

(47) *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*¹

Acta xi. 17;
xv. 8, 9.
Rom. x. 12.

The converts from amongst the Jews brought with them somewhat of the exclusive spirit of the whole Jewish people; and whilst they were ready to receive the Gentiles as fellow-heirs of the promise, and prepared to recognize their right to admission into the Christian Church, they considered that the only entrance into that Church was by means of the rite by which they acknowledged themselves to be Jews: they thought that the converts to Christianity from amongst the Gentiles must first be circumcised, and by this act accept the law of Moses, and that then only might they be baptized and received into the Church of Christ. Here St. Peter asserts that to those Gentiles who have received the Spirit water is still needed, but water alone, to make them Christians.²

Here let us note that the Apostle does not say, as many since have said, Since these converts have received the gift of the Spirit, therefore the external rite is not needed. Rather he says, Since these have evidently received the baptism of the Spirit, no man can deny to them the necessary baptism by water, for which they have thus clearly been prepared by God Himself.³ They who have received of the Spirit for their regeneration must yet put off the old man, and be buried with Christ in the baptism of water. What then the Apostle thought necessary, what he commanded in the case of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, who will reject? They who have the Spirit, who walk humbly with their God, following the guidance of the Spirit, will submit their reason and their wills to Him.⁴

Estius.

Bengel.

Gagneius.

Hofmeister.

¹ "Cum signo sensibili et dono linguarum, quamvis non in tanta plenitudine sicut Apostoli, qui primitias Spiritus acceperunt."—*Dion. Carthusianus.*

² "Prius Deus fide purificat corda eorum, deinde per aquam foris id factum esse vult ostendi, ut eorum obedientia nota fiat exhibita illi, qui intus purificasset: quandoque tamen simul concurrebat ablutio aquæ et Spiritus."—*Salmeron.*

³ "Licet Spiritum Sanctum in eos delapsum cerneret, necessarium tamen existimavit aquam ad baptismum con-

summandam et animam corporis ablutione lavandam, ut veterem hominem Dominus sepeliret cum concupiscentiis suis, et novum excitaret hominem."—*Gagneius.*

⁴ "Ego nolim contemnere, multo autem minus rejicere aquam, quam Christus tanti fecit, quam Apostolus *lavacrum regenerationis* nominavit [Titum iii. 5], qua Christus Ipse baptizatus fuit, et quam tactu sui sanctissimi corporis sanctificavit, quam denique nemo Christianus unquam, quando potuit habere, contempsit."—*Hofmeister.*

Acts ii. 38;
viii. 16.
1 Cor. i. 17.

(48) *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.*

Matt. viii.
10, 11.
Matt. xv.
21—23.

John xii. 20
—22.

Acts viii. 27
—39.

Tirinus.

1 Cor. i. 17.
Lorinus.

John til. 22;
iv. 2.

Salmeron.

There had been several foreshadowings and anticipations of the calling in of the Gentiles to be partakers with the Jews of the promises made to Abraham, and to receive that gift which so many of the chosen nation rejected. Thus, when the centurion came to our Lord in order that his servant should be healed, and Christ commended him by saying, *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*, He goes on to speak of the many who shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. The reception of the Syro-Phœnician woman was another indication of the calling in of the Gentiles. In the Gentiles, again, who came up to worship at the feast of the Passover, and who desired to see Christ, and were admitted to the presence of our Lord, we have an anticipation of this ingathering; and in the baptism of the eunuch of the Queen of the Ethiopians we have an instance of the reception of a Gentile by baptism into the Church of Christ. This baptism of Cornelius and his household, however, was the solemn and public recognition of the right of the Gentile converts to Christian baptism, without submitting to the Jewish rite: an acknowledgment of the truth *that God is no respecter of persons*.

We learn from a passage in one of St. Paul's Epistles, that he seldom baptized the converts, leaving this duty to those specially appointed to this office: this would seem to have been also the practice of other of the Apostles of Christ. In the same way, we are told that our Blessed Lord seldom baptized, but assigned this office to His Apostles during the time of His dwelling upon earth. After His ascension, it would seem from this passage that His Apostles remitted that duty to those who were called to this special ministry, and though they occasionally baptized, yet they ordinarily employed themselves in the other duties of the Christian ministry.¹ *He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord*. St. Luke is not here giving the form of words which accompanied baptism; this he does not do, but he distinguishes between the baptism of Christ and that which was not unknown to the Jews in the reception of a proselyte. He tells us by what baptism these men were justified; it

¹ "Verisimiliter Petrus propriis coni qui probabiliter erat inter sex manibus Cornelium: amicos verò et illos fratres qui concomitabantur."—Lienard.

was not by that of John, still less by that in use among the Jews, but by that of Christ. Yet here we must note that what he does was strictly in accordance with the universal practice of the Church, and with the command of Christ. He had bidden them baptize *in the name*, not the names, of God *the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; and here St. Peter, who must needs have been obedient to His Master's commands in this particular, is recorded to have baptized, or to have directed their baptism, *in the name of the Lord*, that is, of God, who is *the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost*.¹

Fromond.
Matt. xxviii.
19.

Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. As the people of Samaria when instructed by Christ besought Him that He would tarry with them, so did these first-fruits of the Gentiles ask the same of His Apostle. They prayed him to tarry certain days²—for their consolation who were new in the faith of Christ, to strengthen that grace which they had just received, to instruct them more perfectly in the doctrines and in the laws of that kingdom to which they had been now admitted, and that they might enjoy more of the society of him who had been the instrument of so great a blessing as that which they had just received at his hands.

John iv. 40.
Lorinus.

Huré.
Dion. Carth.
End of
Epistle for
Monday in
Whitsun
Week.

¹ "Notat Beda, licet toto hoc Actuum Apostolorum libro Lucas semper dicat, omnes baptizatos fuisse in nomine Christi: tamen non voluit formam baptismi describere, sed distinguere baptismum à Christo, sub forma Personarum institutum, à bap-

tismo Joannis et quotidianis baptismatibus Judæorum [Marc. vii. 4]."—
Fromond.

² "*Aliquot diebus.* Nulla noctis mentio fit. Diem apud eos justus facit, quos præsentia sua beat." —
Novarinus.

CHAPTER XI.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
PRO-PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

CALIGULA.
MARYLLUS.
{ JONATHAN and THEOPHILUS
 in same year.

(1) *And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.*

THE admission of the Gentiles into the fold of Christ without having passed through the gate of Judaism is a fact of such great moment in the history of the Church, that it is not surprising that the narrative should be repeated, as though to fix it deeper upon the memory.¹ And yet the first part of this chapter is not a mere repetition. In the last we have the account of the baptism of Cornelius, in the present we have the way in which the tidings were received by the Church, and the defence or apology which St. Peter made to the Church for this admission of Gentiles who had not submitted to the law of Moses. In this way did the Holy Spirit confirm the great truth that *God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.* He confirmed it as great truths have often been confirmed. Men doubted and disbelieved, and contention arose, and the question was rehearsed, so that disbelief might be removed and men should have no honest pretext for doubt. And the fact

Acts x. 34, 35.

Salmeron.

¹ "Ita natura comparatum est, ut illa, de quibus diu hæsitavimus vel acriter cum aliis disceptavimus, postquam illorum veritas comperta est, atque explorata, firmitus retineantur et constantius asserantur: quamobrem cum Spiritus Sanctus animadverteret vocationem Gentium ad Evangelium, rem esse gravissimi ac maximi ponderis, non contentus visione lintei, illam

Petro indicare ac descensu Spiritus Sancti in Gentiles confirmare voluit illam in disceptionem vocari à credentibus ex circumcissione; ut quo magis controverteretur, agitareturquo, illustris magis redderetur ac perspicua, cordaque aliter sentientium pacarentur agnitæque veritate acquiescerent."—*Salmeron.*

that discussion ensued at this time, and that an investigation was made into the causes of Peter's conduct, will show us that this and such like truths were not received without examination and the production of evidence so as to satisfy doubters. If, then, the vision by which St. Peter was taught the will of God in this particular could have been denied, those who *contended with him* would not have admitted its truth.

The *Apostles* as well as the *brethren* who had been dispersed, some in the work of evangelizing the people doubtless, came together to hear from the mouth of St. Peter the account of the baptism of Cornelius and his household. It was not merely *the Apostles*, but the *Apostles* with the other *brethren*, who desired to know the truth of the report which had reached them.¹ They had heard that *the Gentiles had also received the word of God*. They do not say that they had received the Holy Ghost, but only *the word of God*, for the gift of the Holy Ghost was received with *the word*, and it was the gift promised by the Word.

Menochius.
Beeien.

Novarinus.

(2) *And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, (3) Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*

Acts x. 45, 48.
Gal. ii. 12.

An ancient tradition of the Church affirms that Cerinthus was the mover of the opposition to the reception of the uncircumcised into the Church of Christ. That he may have done so is consistent with all that we know of his heresy, and of the commotion of which he was the cause.

Corn. & Lap.

When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, after remaining certain days at Cæsarea with Cornelius, according to his request, *they that were of the circumcision contended with him*. When St. Luke wrote this book of the *Acts* the Church consisted of the circumcised and the uncircumcised; those who had entered it from Judaism, and those who had come to it direct from heathenism, and he is thought to indicate this by his remark, that it was only *they of the circumcision*

Acts x. 48.

¹ Which were in Judæa. "La Judée est mise ici par opposition à Césarée, qui, quoique située dans la Palestine, passait toute fois pour une ville Grecque, parce qu'elle était habitée par des bourgeois païens, et Grecs ou Syriens pour la plupart."—*Sionnet*.

² "Non dicunt ad gentiles, nam cum gentilibus si circumcisi essent, et proselyti facti, licitum habebatur conver-

sari; quia habebantur eodem loco cum Judæis. Sed tota quæstio erat de non circumcisis, an cum illis conversari liceret, eisque salutem quæ in Christo est prædicare. Existimabant enim gentiles priusquam in societatem fide-
lium reciperentur, debere circumcidi et fieri proselytos: et ita interpretabantur Christi mandatum de Evangelio prædicando per omnes gentes."—*Estius*.

Alford. who opposed the admission of the Gentiles. He may, however, mean by *the circumcised* the natural born children of Abraham as distinguished from the proselytes, who had indeed received this rite, but who had not been born within the Jewish Church.

Menochius. *Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised*—to men who were only proselytes of the gate. They did not blame St. Peter because he had preached the gospel to the Gentiles, but that he had gone in to them and had eaten *with them*, since to do so was forbidden by the Rabbins, who held that though such proselytes might reside among them, they were not to be received to familiar intercourse. It was in answer to this charge that the Apostle had come to Jerusalem, and he removed the misconception of *the brethren* by his apology.¹ It was a maxim among these teachers that a Jew might buy food of a Samaritan or a heathen if need be, but he could not receive it as a gift, and he was by no means to *eat with them*, so that by going into the house of Cornelius and remaining with him St. Peter was violating not indeed the law of God, but the interpretation which the Rabbins had given to that law.

Luke i. 3. (4) *But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,* (5) *I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:*

Gaugens. The defence or apology of St. Peter consists wholly of this. He went not, but he was sent, and God's will was revealed to him in a trance from God. In effect he says, I was nothing, I did nothing, save as I was bidden. He did it who is above all laws, and who orders all things according to His will.²

Euthymius. Hofmeister. And this *vision* came to him. It was no message of man which moved him, but a direct command from heaven which determined his conduct; and the command *came* to him when he was *praying* to God, at a time, therefore, when he was not likely to be deceived, and when he could not be misled.

Hugo de S. Charo.

Glossa. interlin.

¹ "Un pasteur doit s'attendre à voir sa conduite blâmée et à trouver de la contradiction. C'est un contrepoids quelquefois nécessaire à la joie d'un bon succès. Il est moins dangereux d'avoir à se justifier d'une accusation

injuste qu'à se défendre du poison des louanges et de l'applaudissement."—*Quesnel*.

² "Potuisset Petrus breviter dixisse, quæcunque feci jussu ejus qui supra legem est feci."—*Hofmeister*.

(6) *Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.* (7) *And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.*

I saw . . . wild beasts, the images of men savage and relentless through sin, and raging like *wild beasts* one against the other. On these, *when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered*, I pondered on the meaning, and did nothing hastily. And, moreover, *I heard a voice*, so that even if the sight might have deceived me, yet the *voice* which God condescended to add to the vision sent by Him was not to be withstood.

Hur.
Hugo de S.
Charo.

Chrysostom.

Thus does God in the revelation of His will appeal to the hearing as well as to the sight. When our Blessed Lord was baptized, not only the Holy Spirit descended on Him visibly, but the voice from heaven proclaimed Him the *beloved Son*; and when Saul was arrested on his way to Damascus, it was not only by means of the great light which shined around him, but by the *voice* of God speaking to him. So here St. Peter was certified of the reality of what was revealed to him by vision as well as to the ear.

Matt. iii. 16,
17.

Acts ix. 3, 4.

(8) *But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.* (9) *But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.* (10) *And this was done three times:¹ and all were drawn up again into heaven.*

St. Peter still urges the certainty of the revelation made to him, what was done was done *three times*, and, therefore, so confirmed to him that he could not be deceived.

Hugo de S.
Charo.

St. Peter thus dwells upon these successive steps as marks of certainty in the revelation—

(1) That he was *praying* when God revealed Himself to him and made known His will.

(2) That what was revealed was made known to him in *vision*, not in a dream nor by any common way.

(3) That he saw it not only once, but that three several times it was shown to him.

¹ “*Receperunt sese omnia in cælum—quasi jam proprio motu sese receperint, utpote sanctificata et mundata et in cœli possessionem atque ad Deum evolutantia,*

à quo per propositum voluntatis suæ, sacramento tamen postea interveniente, cum dono Spiritus Sancti munditiam sanctitatemque acceperant.”—*Lorinus.*

(4) That he did not at once and readily accept the vision, because it directed him to do that which was repugnant to him,—*I said, Not so, Lord.*

(5) That he was reproved for this refusal, and that not by man, but by a messenger from God, but by a *voice . . from heaven.*

Hofmeister.

(11) *And, behold, immediately there were three men¹ already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me.* (12) *And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:* (13) *And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;* (14) *Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*

John xvi. 18.
Acts x. 19;
xv. 7, 23.

Acts x. 30.

Immediately—the explanation of the vision followed close upon the vision itself. Even, he says, whilst I thought on this thing, and was considering its meaning, the interpretation of the vision was made known to me by the coming of these *three men* from Cæsarea.

Hofmeister.

These six brethren, who accompanied St. Peter to the house of Cornelius, seem also to have gone up with him to Jerusalem as witnesses of what had passed at the baptism of Cornelius and his household.² To these he appeals and speaks of the things showed unto *us*, unto us who are now present.

Lechler.

Stier.

(15) *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.* (16) *Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

Acts ii. 4.
Is. xlv. 3.
Joel ii. 28;
iii. 18.
Matt. iii. 11.
John i. 26, 33.
Acts i. 5; xix.
4.

The Holy Ghost fell on them as on us, not necessarily meaning that He was given in the same measure, but to the same ends. *On us*, not only, that is, on the Apostles, but on the whole body of the assembled disciples of Christ, upon whom *at the beginning*, that is, on the day of Pentecost,

Lorinus.
Estius.

¹ "Pulchrè septenario fratrum numero teste, gratia Spiritus Sancti septiformis effusa est."—*Bede.*

² "Hinc Pet. de Marca de Concordia

Sacerdotii et Imperii, vi. 26, 3, moris factum esse putat, ut olim Presbyter accusatus sex testibus productis purgare se teneretur."—*Wolffius.*

He was given. As that outpouring at the beginning was the Pentecost of the whole Church, so was this outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and his household the Gentile Pentecost, the manifestation of God's love to the Gentiles, and their call into the Church of Christ.¹

Then remembered I the word of the Lord. He remembered, and the meaning of his Lord's words was at the same time made evident to St. Peter. According to the promise of Christ to His Apostles, the Holy Spirit now brought to his remembrance the things which Christ had said unto him, and guided him at the same time into all truth.

(17) Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? (18) When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

God had given to the Gentiles the same gift which He had before given to those who from among the Jews had believed, that is, as the words mean, on their believing, or when they believed. What, St. Peter says, was I—I who am but a mere instrument in the hand of God, who am but dust and ashes,—what was I that I could in this matter withstand God?²

When they heard these things—those who had opposed the admission of the Gentiles into the Church except on condition of their obeying the Mosaic law held their peace, were unable any longer to contend with the Apostles, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, and with repentance had given to them the forgiveness of sin, and where this is there is life. In this he tells us—

(1) That even repentance, sorrow for sin, the desire of returning to God, and the beginning of conversion to God, is not from ourselves, it is God moving us, it is God's gift to us.

¹ "Dieu égale les promesses des Gentils aux promesses des Juifs, pour humilier ceux-cy, pour consoler les autres, et pour marquer l'unité du corps qu'ils doivent composer sans distinction. C'est icy comme la Pentecôte des Gentils, le commencement de l'accomplissement des promesses à notre égard et notre première entrée dans le corps

de Jesus-Christ. Ce mystère nous peut-il donc être indifférent?" — Quesnel.

² "Notandum est non tantum palam reluctando, sed etiam cessando nos Deo resistere, si non exsequimur quod vocationis nostræ proprium est." — Calvin.

Hackett.

Quesnel.

John xiv. 26.

Bengel.

Acts x. 47;

xv. 8, 9.

Rom. x. 12,

18; xv. 9—

16.

Meyer.

Bengel.

Lyra.

Bengel.

Hofmeister.

(2) That the repentance which God gives us is not merely sorrow for sin, but it is that which, nurtured by Him and perfected by His grace, leads us to life, to a life of grace here, and to a life of glory and eternal happiness in the world to come.

They glorified God because that He had given also to the Gentiles the grace of repentance by which they might enter into life.¹ This gift of *repentance unto life* has been diversely interpreted by commentators. Thus—

(1) It has been taken to mean that God had given to them a time and place for repentance.

(2) That He had given to them the grace and the desire for repentance.

(3) That He had given to them the fruits and effects of repentance—the remission of their sins.

These three different meanings are all included in the last, the remission of sins, which is God's gift completing these other prevenient gifts, for to those to whom He gives the fruits of repentance He has before given time and place and the longing desire to repent and return to Him. All these gifts God gave to the nations who thirsted for a Deliverer, even though they knew not always for Whom they thirsted; and when they had proved the sincerity of their desire for Him, then by the ministration of His Apostles He called them into His fold.

Luke i. 66.
Acts ii. 47;
vi. 1; viii.
1; ix. 29,
35.

(19) *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice,² and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.* (20) *And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.* (21) *And the*

¹ "ὁ θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἔδωκεν—Pœnitentia quæ hic dicitur cum Articulo (τὴν μετάνοιαν), intelligitur ea quam Salvator noster Apostolos suos (Luc. xxiv. 47), jusserat ut omnibus prædicarent; adeoque pœnitentia Synecdochicè hic dicitur de tota œconomia salutis à Deo constituta."—*Beelen*.

² Phœnicia in the apostolic times was a narrow but fertile slip of territory, watered by numerous streams, lying between the western slope of Lebanon and the sea, and reaching from the river

Eleutherus on the north to Carmel on the south, a distance of about 120 miles. Its limits, however, varied at different times. Its principal cities were Tripolis, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, and Berytos. It was subject at the time of the Apostles to the Romans, and was included within the province of Syria. The statement in the text accounts for the existence of the Christians in its two principal cities, Tyre and Sidon, which is mentioned abruptly in Acts xxi. 4; xxvii. 3.—*Winer and Hackett*.

and of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

*They which were scattered abroad upon the persecution which rose on account of Stephen and after his death; for both these meanings are contained in the word about.*¹

By the *Grecians* is meant the Hellenistic Jews, those who used the Greek language and lived among the Greeks, though many commentators have understood by this word Gentile Grecians, and have supposed that these words refer to the preaching of the gospel after the reception of Cornelius into the Church. This, however, is unlikely. The better reading is not *Grecians*, but *Hellenists*; and even if the first meaning is maintained, and the manuscript authorities are pretty fairly balanced, still *Grecians* does not necessarily imply heathen Greeks, since Greek is a generic word including in it Hellenist, though Hellenist as a specific word would not apply to a Greek.²

The hand of the Lord was with them; that is, He was evidently present both—

(1) By the power given to these ministers of His word by which they were able to work miracles, or by the miracles wrought immediately by God in attestation of the truth of their words.

(2) By the inward conversion of the hearer, which is only effected by *the hand of the Lord*, who operates both by the outward miracle in confirmation of the truths of revelation, and by the inward conversion of the heart of the hearer.

His hand makes efficacious His word, and when the seed of the word is received into a faithful and true heart it is matured by *His hand* and always brings forth fruit.³

(22) *Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.*

¹ "ἐπὶ Στεφάνῳ—After his death, over his body, as it were. So chap. ii. 2, ἐποιήσαντο κοπετόν μίγαν ἑαυτοῖς, Herod. vii. 225, λίθινος λίων ἔθηκεν ἐπὶ Λεωνίδῃ."—*Humphrey*. Syrus habet ἡθα estephanus, id est, propter Stephanum; vel, ob Stephanum, post mortem videlicet eius aut etiam inchoando à morte eiusdem."—*Lorinus*.

² See a letter to the pupils of Bishops College "on the word Hellenist," by

Rev. Dr. Kay. Calcutta, 1856.

³ "Hic est verus verbi Dei auditus fructus, quando auditores ad Christum convertuntur, Christum audiunt, Christo credunt, Christo obediunt. Quod ut fiat et felicius fiat, necesse est ut manus Dei concionatoribus cooperetur, Ego plantavi, inquit Paulus, Apollo rigavit, Deus autem incrementum dedit, 1 Cor. iii. 6. Certè ministerium verbi non potest esse frugiferum sinè præsidio Dei."—*Hofmeister*.

Syr. Vers. Sâ.
De Dieu.
Humphrey.
Corn. à Lap.

Sâ.
Hardouin.

Lyra.
Hugo de S.
Charo.
Cajetan.

Wordsworth.

Chrysostom.

Fromond.

Quesnel.

Acts ix. 27.
[The Epistle
for St.
Barnabas'
Day, 22—30
verses.]

Acts xi. 10,
20.
Lange.

Eph. iii. 6.

Calvin.

Cook.

Quesnel.

The *tidings* which came unto the ears of the Church at Jerusalem¹ were of the reception of the gospel at Antioch as it was made known to the people of that city by Christian teachers from *Cyprus and Cyrene*, who had been driven from Jerusalem upon the persecution that arose about Stephen. The account of God's work in moving the heart of the people of this city came, it would seem, to the Church immediately after the call and baptism of Cornelius, and the acknowledgment on the part of the Apostles that the Gentiles were *fellow-heirs* and *partakers* with them of the promises, and of the blessings given to the world by the incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of Christ. This conversion, then, of Cornelius, together with the confession of the Apostles, that in this conversion God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, was the preparation by which they were enabled to recognize His hand in that large ingathering of the Gentiles which was then taking place at Antioch. From this city, in truth, the Gentile Church took its origin, since all that had gone before were but foreshadowings and preparations for the conversions, the *tidings* of which came now unto the ears of the mother Church which was at Jerusalem. The significance of the conversions at Antioch arises from the fact that this city was the capital of Syria, the residence of the proconsul, to whom the Roman procurator of Judea was subordinate, and that it was the abode of a numerous, an active, thriving, and intelligent, though deeply corrupt, population.² What, then, was done at Antioch would be soon made known throughout Asia Minor, and tidings of the success of the gospel teaching would reach to Greece, and even to Italy; at the same time the power of the new teaching, and of the resistlessness of God's grace, was evidenced in its influence over a people so deeply sunk in sin.

In the fact that these teachers of the truth were men who were scattered abroad by the success of the persecution of those who hated the truth and endeavoured to destroy it, we have an instance of the mysteriousness of God's dealings with the world, and how that which seemingly had been successful for a moment in hindering the gospel, was but instrumental in its furtherance and triumph. They, that is, the whole body of the faithful, or at least the whole body of the Apostles congregated in Jerusalem, sent forth Barnabas, that he might go and examine into the truth of

¹ "L'Eglise matrice de Jerusalem, est toujours appliquée au bien des nouvelles églises. Le pouvoir de la mission est attribué à l'Eglise, comme à la

depositaire de l'autorité apostolique: c'est à elle que tout est donné: *unitati, non uni.*"—Quesnel.

² See note A at end of this chapter.

these *tidings*, and on his return might certify the *Church* Dion. Carth.
which was in Jerusalem of the reality of these conversions,
 and at the same time might console, instruct, and confirm Lyra.
 the new converts.

Apart from the character of Barnabas as a very *son of consolation*, there seems an evident fitness in his choice for Acts iv. 36.
 this work.

(1) As a Hellenic Jew he was skilled in the use of the Greek tongue and literature, and could therefore appeal Acts xi. 20.
 readily to the *Grecians* of Antioch.

(2) He was himself a native of Cyprus, the friend, therefore, of those teachers who had first made known the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles of Antioch, so that he would, Lienard.
 doubtless, for that reason be the more acceptable to them.

(23) *Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.*¹ Acts xiii. 43; xiv. 22.

Who, when he came and had seen, not the grace of God, but literally and emphatically the grace which was of God (τὴν χάριν τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ), in the increase of the Church, and Alford.
 had seen also the direct work of God, in the change of life Grotius.
 from the corruption of Gentile manners to the purity and Cook.
 self-denial which marked the lives of the new converts, and had noted the virtue which was in them, and was made evident in their daily lives, all which were so many manifest tokens of the *grace of God*, given to and abiding in those who had been called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel, he *was glad, and exhorted them* to continue in the faith,² and to be patient unto the end, that so they might obtain *the crown of life*, promised to those who abide steadfastly. Dion. Carth.
See Epistle for St. Philip and St. James at end.

For though perseverance is a gift of God, yet it depends upon man's free-will whether he exert and so retain possession of this gift of peace. God at the first infuses His

¹ "προσμένειν, to adhere to, cleave to—To be converted is the act; to adhere to is the state."—Bengel.

"A beginning conversion must have, and that most noticeable, when from leaving God's face and favour you turn timorously to seek Him again. But for its completion the age of Methuselah were insufficient. Men are never converted, but always converting; saints never built up, but always building up."—Edward Irving, *Works*, vol.

i. p. 47.

² "By the παρακαλεῖν of Barnabas we are reminded of the circumstance mentioned by Luke (chap. iv. 36), that he had received this surname—a son of prophetic address or exhortation—by reason of his special gift; so that we may well suppose that these exhortations which he addressed to the Christians at Antioch were eminently spiritual, powerful, and earnest discourses."—Lange.

grace into the heart, and moves us to accept, but we must *stretch forth the hand* if we would receive the fulness of His blessing, and must exert the strength which He has given us if we would keep our hold of it. It is perseverance alone which is crowned.

Matt. xii. 13.

Corn. & Lap.
Quenesel.

How mightily the grace of God worked in the hearts of the first converts is evidenced, not merely in the readiness with which the Gentiles received the word of God and the firmness with which they retained it, but also in its effects upon the lives and characters of those who *preached the Lord Jesus* to the people of Antioch. They had fled from Jerusalem on account of the persecution; they had been *scattered abroad*, because they were known to be followers of Christ. This would imply somewhat of natural timidity, and shrinking from suffering and persecution; but when they came to Antioch, God's grace moving and fitting them for the work which He required of them, they were filled with boldness, and preached the gospel, and openly confessed Christ before the heathen.

Hofmeister.

Acts v. 14;
vi. 5; xi. 21.

(24) *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

He was a good man, as was shown in his readiness for the work to which he was appointed, and by his teaching; the *Son of Consolation*,¹ to those whose hearts were hardened by the weight of sin, and by the hopelessness, amidst Paganism, of any deliverance. The goodness of Barnabas was also conspicuous in the humility with which he sought the assistance of another, gifted with more excellent graces, and in his choosing Saul as his fellow-labourer at Antioch, who was soon to eclipse him by his labours for Christ. He was also *full of the graces* infused by the *Holy Ghost*, full of zeal for his Master's cause and of love for souls, so that his *faith* was perfect. This *faith* and abnegation of self had been evidenced by the sale of his property, and by his laying *the money* at the feet of the Apostles, for the use of those among the brethren who were in need.

Lorinus.

Dion. Carth.

Sylveira.

And the result of these gifts of the Spirit and of the *faith* of Barnabas was evidenced in this, that *much people* at

¹ "Pro hortabatur, græcè est *παρκαλει*, quod multa significat, *Primò*, cohortabatur; *Secundò*, excitabat; *Tertiò*, consolabatur; *Quartò*, obsecrabat; *Quintò*, efflagitabat, ita Syrus; *Sextò*, advocabat et quasi advocatus causam

eorum agens consulebat omnibus. Sic S. Chrysostomus, *Hortabatur*, inquit, *omnes cum præconio et laudibus: et forsan in eo quod laudabat et approbabat turbam, plures convertit: virtus enim laudata crescit.*"—Corn. & Lapide.

Antioch were added unto the Lord by his preaching. Only those, indeed, who have the presence of the Spirit within them, and can show forth to others their *faith*, can move the hearts of unbelievers, and stir up the souls of the newly converted to steadfastness in the faith.¹ Corn. & Lap.

(25) *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:* (26) *And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* Acts ix. 30.

It was Barnabas who, upon the conversion of Saul, brought him to the Apostles, when the disciples doubted of the reality of the change which had taken place in him, who was to be hereafter the *chiefest of the Apostles* in his labours for the evangelization of the heathen. It has been supposed that he was a friend and fellow-student with Saul, and brought up with him at the feet of Gamaliel. Be this as it may, Barnabas would seem to have been an early friend of the future Apostle of the Gentiles,² and now sought his aid in the work at Antioch. He sought Saul, and went for that purpose to Tarsus. However bold St. Paul was in the work of the ministry when called to it, he did not offer himself for the office of an Apostle, but was chosen to it by others. Acts ix. 27.

A whole year they assembled themselves. This was the beginning of that future ministry of St. Paul, of which we have such abundant fruits, noted in the Acts and Epistles, and in the history of the Church. *And the disciples were called,* were known by the name, that is, were commonly known as *Christians, first at Antioch.* As yet they were known amongst themselves merely as *disciples*, or as *saints*, or as *the brethren*, whilst by the Jews they were spoken of as *Nazarenes* or *Galileans*. Now they were to have a new name,—that of their Lord and Master, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, *The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* This new name is not said to be given Lange.
Novarinus.
Cook.
Hammond.
Fromond.

¹ "Et apposita est multa turba Domino. Licet multi ab aliis discipulis conversi fuissent ad Dominum, plures tamen adhuc per efficacem Barnabæ à Spiritu Sancto animatam prædicationem. Ad Spiritum et eloquentiam Barnabæ, accedebat majestās corporis, quæ verbo addebat auctoritatem: unde

Lycaones postea putaverunt eum esse Jovem, et tauros ei, tanquam summo Deorum, immolare voluerunt. Infra Acts xiv. 11."—*Fromond.*

² "Ut quæreretur Saulum. Veterum amicum suum, et sub Gamalielē con-discipulum."—*Menochius.*

Isaiah lxii. 2

by the Apostles, nor assumed by the believers themselves; it is not known whether it was applied by the heathen or not, though it is probable that this was so; it could not have been given by the Jews, who would not have applied the name of Christ, the Messiah, to the hated followers of the crucified. In accordance with the prophecy, by whatever unknown human instrument it was first used, it was doubtless the name *which the mouth of the Lord did name* for His chosen ones.

Lange.

Dion. Carth.

Chrysostom.

That the converts to Christianity should first have been called Christians at Antioch, is incidentally a testimony to the number and importance of these converts, so that a name was needed to distinguish them; and also an evidence of the strenuousness of the labours of Paul and Barnabas, who by their teaching added *much people* to the Church.¹

Sylveira.

We, as these first converts, bear the name of Christ; the name is a call to a really Christian walk and conversation, and to the earnest following of the example which Christ has left us. Too often, however, whilst we bear the name of Christ we prove ourselves enemies of the cross, and a hindrance to the conversion of those who are without the fold, for, alas! many are now called *Christians* whom at the last day Christ will reject as none of His, since He has said, *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophetised in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.*

Matt. vii. 21
—23.Acts ii. 17;
xiii. 1; xv.
32; xxi. 9.
1 Cor. xii. 28.
Eph. iv. 11.
Acts xxi. 10.

(27) *And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.* (28) *And there stood up one of them named Agabus,² and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.*

These prophets were preachers of the gospel, the recog-

¹ *Cognominarentur primum Antiochiæ.* "Inde advertit Eumenius quod ob id potissimum digna habita est Antiochia sede pontificia, quoniam ibi primum statuerant ut discipuli nominarentur Christiani, cum nihil tale factum sit in Judæa: unde ortum habuit ecclesia, licet tam multi in ea credidissent."—*Gagnæus.*

² "Ἀγαθος, vid. infra xxi. 10. Derivatur hoc nomen ab אָמַי *amavit*, ut ideo Agabus notet *dilectum*, adeoque sit idem ac Græca nomina Agapetus, Agapus, in inscriptt. ap. *Gruterum*, p. 790, 6, p. 1065, 8, *Gudium*, p. 365, 3, p. 370, 5, et *Muratorium*, p. 432, 1."—*Kuinoel.* Another derivation, however, of Ἀγαθος is from אָמַי a locust.

nized ministers of the primitive Church, charged with the work of evangelizing the heathen. Some of these, and in this case *Agabus*, had the miraculous gift of foretelling future events, but this was not necessarily the case with all those who were *prophets*, that is, those who made known the will of the Lord. This gift of prophesying future events was, however, one of the miraculous gifts which were common in the infant Church, and which had been pointed to as one of the characteristics of those days. *It shall come to pass afterwards*, after the captivity and sufferings and falling away of Judah and of Israel, *that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy*, a prediction usually understood to imply the outpouring of the gift of declaring that which was to happen hereafter. Thus *Agabus* is said *by the Spirit*, by revelation, that is, of the Holy Spirit, to have foretold this famine, *which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar*. Hardouin.

Throughout all the world need not mean more than throughout the Roman Empire, as when in St. Luke we read that a decree went forth from *Cæsar Augustus* that all the world should be taxed, that is, all the Roman world;¹ it may, therefore, be used in this sense, and according to the prediction we know that the famine did take place at this time. Or it may be limited to the land of Judæa and refer specially to the famine there. Of this famine *Josephus* speaks, and tells us that it occurred in the times of *Fadus* and *Tiberius Alexander*, the first of whom was procurator in A.D. 44, the latter in A.D. 46. There are three other famines mentioned by classical writers as occurring in the reign of *Claudius*,—one in Greece, and two in Italy,—so that famine in the days of this emperor must have extended at least throughout the greater part of the Roman world.² Joel ii. 28.
Dion. Carth.

(29) *Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa:* (30) *Which also they did,* Heinrich.
Luke ii. 1.

¹ "ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην, sc. γῆν, over all the inhabited land, i.e. Judæa and the adjacent countries. The Greek and Roman writers employed ἡ οἰκουμένη, to denote the Greek and the Roman world; and a Jewish writer would naturally employ such a term to denote the Jewish world."—*Hackett*.

² "Meminit hujus famis universalis, Suetonius in Claudio, Joseph. lib. ii. Antiq. c. 2, et Eusebius, lib. ii. Hist. Eccles. c. 8, qui omnes verè eam evenisse tes-

tantur. Quod factum, omnis duobus post prædicationem elapsis, anno currenti secundo Claudii, ut habet Dion. lib. lx." —*Schmidt*. "Animadvertite ut *Agabus* neutrum prædixerit neque annum quo fames futura esset, neque uno atque eodem tempore ubique futuram, sed solummodo futuram sub Claudio. Atque sub Claudio tamen non semel nec leviter in Judæam inque alias regiones ingruisse historici memoriæ prodiderunt."—*Patritius*.

Acts xii. 25.
Rom. xv. 26.
1 Cor. xvi. 1.
2 Cor. ix. 1.

and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

The Church at Jerusalem had sent Barnabas to examine into and to return with a report of the truth of the *tidings* of the conversion of Gentiles at Antioch to the faith in Christ, and the return of Barnabas with Saul, bearing the bounty of the Church in that city to the poor of Jerusalem, was the testimony given to the reality of the conversion of the Gentiles. The Christians in Jerusalem had suffered by the *spoiling of their goods*, and many of them had been reduced to poverty, so that this seasonable bounty was needed by them; and as they of Jerusalem had ministered unto the spiritual wants of the Gentiles of Antioch, by giving to them spiritual riches, so did the newly-converted Christians of Antioch minister to the brethren in Jerusalem of their carnal things. He who has hold of the true faith, and confidence in God, and love for Him, and for His members, will manifest the possession of this grace by his deeds of charity to the members of Christ, and in them to Christ Himself.

*Which also they did, and sent it to the elders, who had the care and oversight of the whole body of the faithful, that is, to the Apostles of Christ, the rulers of the Christian Church,*¹
by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. How important a work alms is, and how large a place it occupies amongst the duties of the Christian, we may incidentally gather from this, that those two who were mighty in the work of the ministry were chosen and employed on this errand of love,—the carrying up of *relief* from the brethren at Antioch to those at Jerusalem.² This was the first occasion on which Saul went up to Jerusalem for the purpose of bearing with him the alms of the faithful to the poor of that city. We read of another going up for the same purpose, much later in his ministry. Of this he makes mention in his speech before Felix. *After many years, that is, many years after his conversion, I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings.*

But the gratitude and charity of the brethren at Antioch towards their fellow Christians in Jerusalem were not the only graces manifested by this act. Their faith was strikingly evidenced by their contributions to the necessities of the poor saints at Jerusalem. Agabus had predicted that there would be a *great dearth throughout all the world*, so

¹ See note B at end of this chapter.

² "Le sacrifice de la charité chrétienne est bien digne d'être offert à Dieu par les mains des Apôtres et des Prêtres. Les premiers Apôtres ne mépri-

sent pas le soin des aumônes, tant pour rendre cet emploi recommandable aux fideles, que parce qu'ils sont eux-mêmes les pauvres des pauvres."—*Quesnel*.

that Antioch itself would suffer in this manner, yet, like the widow of Sarepta, who in the depth of her poverty ministered in faith out of her scanty means to the prophet, so did these Gentile converts, trusting that God's bounty would supply all their needs, send their alms to those who were to suffer with them in this time of famine.

Calvin.
[End of
Epistle
for St.
Barnabas'
Day.]

NOTE A.—ANTIOCH.

Antioch, the capital of Syria, was founded about three hundred years before the Christian era by Seleucus Nicanor, and was named by him in honour of his father Antiochus. It is situated on the river Orontes, about twenty miles distant from the Mediterranean Sea, and is equally distant from Constantinople and Alexandria, being about seven hundred miles from either of these cities. By its harbour of Seleucia it was in communication with all the trade of the Mediterranean; and through the open country behind Lebanon it was conveniently approached by the caravans from Mesopotamia and Arabia. It was long acknowledged as the metropolis of the East, and the third city in the world, Rome and Alexandria alone taking precedence of it. It was the residence of the Grecian kings, and afterwards of the Roman proconsuls of Syria. In the fertility of the soil on which it stands, in its trade and riches and its commercial enterprise, it was not surpassed by any other city of antiquity; and for sixteen hundred years it reigned, according to the testimony of Pliny, indisputably "the queen of the whole East," a city prodigal of luxuries and of sensuous delights. The wall which encircled the whole city embraced an area of ten miles in circumference, and contained within its enclosure four distinct cities or wards, each guarded by its own wall. One of these was built by Seleucus Nicanor, the second was added by the Syro-Macedonian kings, the third by Seleucus Callenicus, and the fourth by Antiochus Epiphanes. From this circumstance Antioch was sometimes called Tetrapolis; it was known, also, by the name of Antiochia-Daphne, from the celebrated village and groves of Daphne in one of its suburbs,

and was thus distinguished from another Antioch which was built by Seleucus, in Pisidia. The latter city was visited by Paul and Barnabas the next year after their labours in the Syrian Antioch (Acts xiii. 14—51). In the days of its ancient glory Antioch was adorned with galleries, theatres, fountains, baths, sumptuous palaces, and magnificent temples, and decorated with statues of the best period of Grecian art. One street of continuous colonnades ran in a straight line from the eastern to the western suburb of the city, a distance of nearly four miles; and here, sheltered from the blaze of the sun, crowds of traders, and idlers, and pleasure-seekers were congregated throughout the day. At the time when Barnabas visited it the population of Antioch was estimated at five hundred thousand souls. In no other city of the East was to be found so large a number of Greeks as in this city. In addition to these, Antioch contained a large native Syrian population, speaking their own language, and mingled with citizens of all countries and races and tongues, drawn together for the purpose of commerce, by the attractions of pleasure, or for the requirements of the provincial administration. The founder settled a great number of Jews here, and gave them the privilege of citizenship, and from that time large bodies of Jews had made the city their residence, and at the time of the visit of Paul and Barnabas these were numerous enough to occupy a distinct quarter in Antioch, and were governed by an Ethnarch chosen from amongst themselves.

Whilst the physical and material aspect of the city was one of great brilliancy, its moral condition was most deplorable. With the fickle Syrian and

the quick-witted Greek of Antioch, the charlatanry of Babylonia and all the varied imposture of Asia found a ready welcome. The city was the centre of a moral corruption, which seemed to taint all who were brought into contact with it. Jugglers, quacks, buffoons, actors, magicians, sorcerers, and disreputable priests of all rites, were here herded together in one seething mass of iniquity. It was a city of games and of gambling, delighting in its public dances and its religious processions and impure orgies in honour, or at least in memory, of the gods of Babylon, of Assyria, of Egypt, and of Greece; of Astarte and Diana, of Bacchus and of Venus. Though Antioch was not destitute of learning, that branch which was chiefly cultivated was the glittering but unsubstantial learning of the rhetoricians, and the theatrical spectacles which it loved were at once sensational and sensuous. Pleasures of the grossest character were indulged in without check, and all the debaucheries of antiquity, all the enervating sins of the East, were concentrated in this one city, for whilst "it is probable that no populations have ever been more abandoned than those of oriental Greek cities under the Roman Empire, of these cities Antioch was the greatest and the worst." Such spectacles of frivolity and of sin which it presented to the eye terrified earnest minds, and

the official polytheism of the city, the ritual of the countless pagan deities, afforded no satisfaction to those who longed for a religion in which they might find a retreat from the anarchy of the passions. The Platonic philosophy offered its attractions, and satisfied some minds. Judaism had made many proselytes from the Greeks at Antioch, and here from the moment when the persecution which raged at Jerusalem scattered the disciples throughout the cities of Asia [Acts viii. 1], Christianity made some of its most illustrious converts. St. Luke the Evangelist is thought to have been born at Antioch. Nicholas, one of the seven deacons, was a native of this city, and a proselyte from heathenism to Judaism. St. Ignatius, the disciple and friend of St. John, and one of the most illustrious of the early martyrs to the Christian faith, was amongst its first bishops; and later in the history of the city, at the end of the fourth century, here St. John Chrysostom flourished and preached; the same applause which succeeding ages have given to his learning and eloquence, having attended him whilst ministering as the bishop of the Church in this place. See *Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xxiii.; *Döllinger's Jew and Gentile*, vol. i. 432; *Fullarton's Biblical Encyclopedia*, *Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul*, and *Les Apôtres, par Rénan*.

Note B.—ELDERS.

This is the first time the word *elder* occurs in connection with the Christian Church. It was a word used alike to designate age and office, an echo from the time when the elders of a family were also its rulers. It is said by Dionysius Halicarnassus, that *πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τοὺς ἀρίστους καὶ τοὺς γέροντας εἰώθασιν οἱ παλαιοὶ λέγειν*. *The ancients used the word elders both for rulers and old men*, as in Italian, French, Spanish, English, and other languages. Thus in *Signore*, *Seigneur*, *Señor*, *Mayor*, *Alderman*, we have the same double meaning of this one word. In Hebrew an elder or presbyter *זקן* sometimes

meant a ruler, sometimes a senior. Eliezer was the steward of Abraham's house, and is called in Gen. xxiv. 2 the *elder* who ruled over all his house: the *elders* of Pharaoh's house, and the *elders* of all Egypt, were the prefects and administrators of Pharaoh's household and kingdom (Gen. i. 7.); and those who in one place are spoken of as the *elders of Moab* (Num. xxii. 7), are immediately after spoken of as *princes* (שרים) of Moab (v. 8). Later still in the *Theodosian Codex*, where the second law *de Judæis* uses the word *presbyteros*, or *elders*, another law speaks of *Synagogarum patres*, fathers or rulers

of the consistories. This word being then recognized, notwithstanding its double meaning in an ecclesiastical sense amongst the Jews, seems to have been introduced into the Christian Church from them. On the other hand *ἐπίσκοπος*, a word used by Homer (*Il.* 22, 255; *Od.* 8, 163), Herodian (7, 10, 6), and Plutarch (*Sol.* 19), for an overseer or guardian of treaties or laws, had been used by the Alexandrian translators of the Old Testament for *תַּשִּׁיב* (2 Chron. xxxiv. 12, 17), an overseer of public works, and for *שָׂרֵב* (*Is.* ix. 17). See also Joseph. *Antiq.* 10, 4, 1) a prefect of cities. In Athens *ἐπίσκοποι* were magistrates sent out to tributary cities to organize and govern them (Boeckh *Staatshaush.* der Ath. 1, p. 168, 256; Neander *Gesch. der Pflanz. u. Leit. der Chr. Kirche*, 1, p. 178). Whilst, then, both the Greeks and Jews recognized the double meaning of *πρεσβύτερος*, the sense of *elder* seems more especially to be connected with the Jewish administration, and that of *ἐπίσκοπος* with the Greek. Hence it has been supposed, and with reason, that the first name was in use amongst the Jewish converts, and the latter was preferred by the Gentile, that is, the Greek converts, to designate the same office. We have, however, a modern instance in the Greek Church of the adoption of the Jewish practice. The Caloyer or monk is called a "Good elder," *καλόγερος* (from *καλός* and *γέρων*), not from age but from office, since the Caloyer is such at the age of twelve years.

For a time the Christians were undistinguished by any name. They were called "those of that way," "brethren," "saints," &c., and the officers among them were equally undistinguished. All offices at first were comprehended in that of the apostolate, for the Apostles were for a time the universal servants or ministers of the infant Church. Gradually, as the number of the disciples were multiplied (*Acts* vi. 1), there arose a necessity for a division of duties, and in the Church at Jerusalem seven were

chosen to assist the Apostles, and these were known as the *ministers* (*διάκονοι*) of the Church; not that the Apostles were less ministers than before, but the name was appropriated to the new order for distinction sake.

The Apostles were at this moment the *elders* and *overseers*, or *bishops*, of the Church; not, however, with the exception of St. James, that they held any local episcopate, but as bishops of the flock, and elders of the whole Church. When, however, the gospel was preached in the cities of Asia, and afterwards of Greece and Italy, it was necessary that other offices should be separated from the apostolate, and first *presbyters* were left behind to feed the flock of God, and over these one was appointed as the representative of the Apostles and the ruler of the various ministers of the Church. For a time the name *elder* and *bishop* were used of the same officers (*Acts* xx. 17, 20), though afterwards a distinction was made in the use of these names. The Apostles, then, were founders of the Church, they were evangelists, teachers, elders, ministers or deacons, until the increase of the disciples and the necessities of the Church required a distinction of duties. Though John made his abode at Ephesus, yet he was not *bishop* there, but that office was assigned to Timothy (*Rev.* ii. 11), and Crete was given by St. Paul to the charge of Titus. For a time the three orders of the ministry are called, as by St. Clement at Rome, apostles, bishops, deacons, whilst a few years later St. Ignatius distinguishes between presbyters or elders and the overseer or bishop. When, then, Saul and Barnabas came up to Jerusalem to bring the alms of the people of Antioch to the poor brethren in the mother city of Christendom, they brought them to the *elders*, the rulers of the Church, that is, to the Apostles, for as yet there seems to have been no distinction between the presbyterate and the episcopate. See Hammond's note in New Testament, at this place, Döllinger's *First Age of Christianity*, and Mosheim, *de rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum*.

CHAPTER XII.

EMPEROR OF ROME,
KING OF JUDÆA,
HIGH PRIEST,

CLAUDIUS.
HEROD AGRIPPA THE FIRST.
ELIONÆUS.

(1) *Now about that time*¹ *Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.* (2) *And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

Matt. iv. 21;
xx. 23.

[Epistle for
St. Peter's
Day.]

Gorranus.

Theophylact.

Acts xii. 25.
Lunge.

Chrysostom.

About that time, that is, about the time when Barnabas and Saul had returned from Antioch with the alms of the Christians for their poor brethren at Jerusalem,² in the *time* when Claudius was Emperor at Rome, this persecution on the part of Herod commenced. It was not until after the death of James and of the deliverance of Peter that these two Apostles returned to Antioch, taking with them, as their assistant, *John, whose surname was Mark*. Already had the Apostles and the infant Church suffered from the fitful rage of the people, and by the passionate acts of the priests and of the Sanhedrim of the Jews; now commenced the more systematic persecution at the hand of the prince,³ at that time *Herod the king*.⁴ The phrase used, *stretched*

¹ That is, in the year 44, in the fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, and in the eighth year of Agrippa. See *Tillemont*, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire Eccles., c. i. p. 328 (*Venice*, 1732); *Hug's* Introduction to the New Testament; *Lewin's* Key to the Chronology of the New Testament; *Davidson's* Introduction to the Study of the New Testament; and *Rénan*, Les Apôtres.

² "Eodem tempore, quo facta et collecta, quia quantò plus crescit ecclesia in temporalibus tanto plus affligitur."

—Gorranus.

³ "Vexatio inceperat à sacerdotibus continuata à plebe, perfecta à principe."—*Wetstein*.

⁴ Herod Agrippa I. was the son of Aristobulus and Berenice, grandson of Herod the Great, and nephew of Herod Antipas. He was born in the year 10 before Christ, and was educated at the court of Tiberius in Rome. After the death of Drusus he was accused to the Emperor of having expressed a desire for his death, and was imprisoned until the accession of Caligula, by whom he

forth his hands (*ἐπέβαλεν . . . τὰς χεῖρας*) implies that it was an act of aggression, an unjust act on the part of *Herod the king*.¹ The persecutor—Herod Agrippa the First—is significantly called *the king*, to mark that he was not the same Herod before whom Christ had been brought at the command of Pilate.²

Meyer.

Luke xxiii. 7.

The persecution under Herod was first directed against the humbler members of the Church. These he scourged and imprisoned, and then he *killed James*, who is described as *the brother of John*, to distinguish him from the other James, the bishop of Jerusalem, and the kinsman of our Lord. As John survived all the rest of the Apostles, he was far better known to the members of the Church than his brother, thus early removed from amongst them, so that it was natural for St. Luke to describe James by his relationship to John. When these two were brought by their mother to the Saviour, and she entreated that the honours of His kingdom might be given to them, our Blessed Lord had said, *Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with*, and thus early were His words fulfilled. James tasted the first draught of Christ's *cup* of suffering, and first of all the Apostles was *baptized* with the blood of martyrdom, whilst John survived all the other Apostles, and endured a life of suffering in his witness for his Divine Master. James is distinguished as the only Apostle of whose death Holy Scripture itself testifies, the only one of whom we know, on sure evidence, the

Cook.

Bengel.

Matt. xx. 23.

Wordsworth.

was not only released from prison, but received the tetrarchy of Philip, including Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, and that of Lysanias, with the title of *King*. A title which Herod Antipas, before whom our Lord appeared, sought in vain to obtain. Soon afterwards he received also the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas, Galilee and Perea, and on the accession of Claudius was also invested with the government of Samaria and Judæa, so that he, like his grandfather, ruled over all Palestine (Joseph. Antiq. xix. 5, 1; viii. 2). He was an able and popular sovereign, magnificent and showy in his tastes, but vain-glorious, unprincipled, licentious, and cruel. With his devotion to the Roman emperor and government he united a rigorous observance of the ceremonial of the Jewish religion, and earned the admiration of the Jewish populace by

his persecution directed against the Church of Christ. His death, which is recorded in this same chapter of the Acts of the Apostles which mentions his cruelty to James the Elder and to Peter, was attended by circumstances of unusual horror. Whilst listening with complacency to the impious flatteries of his courtiers, he was suddenly stricken with death, and perished miserably, *eaten of worms*.

¹ "*ἐπέβαλεν τὰς χεῖρας*: id est, *ἐπεχείρησεν*, *Aggressus est*. Quum enim nullus personæ casus, quem vocant adjungatur, apparet hanc periphrasim ita est explicandam. Vulgat. *Misit manus*."—Beza.

² "The accuracy of the sacred writer in the expressions which he uses here is remarkable. There was no portion of time for thirty years before, or ever afterwards, in which there was a king

time, the place, and the manner of his death ; he was killed *by Herod the king and with the sword at Jerusalem.*¹ Why Herod singled him out for death we are not informed.² From the name of the Apostle, however, as one of the Sons of Thunder, it is evident that he was ardent and vehement in his declaration of the promises of the gospel, and this zeal makes it natural that he should have been chosen by the persecutor for this honour of primal martyrdom, the first of all the Apostles of Christ who were witnesses to the faith by the pouring out of their blood.³

With the sword. There were four modes of execution amongst the Jews,—stoning, burning, strangling, and killing *with the sword* ; this latter was unusual among the Jews, and borrowed from the practice of the surrounding heathen nations. For this reason it may be of these various modes of death that of the sword was accounted by the Jews the most disgraceful, and it therefore seems that this kind of execution was used in the present instance, like that of crucifixion by the Romans, to mark the contempt of Herod for the disciples of Christ.

He killed James the brother of John. Thus early after the departure of Christ were His words to His Apostles fulfilled, *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

(3) *And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)* (4) *And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him ; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.*⁴

Exod. xii. 14,
15; xxiii. 15.
John xxi. 18.

at Jerusalem, a person exercising that authority in Judæa, or to whom that title could be applied, except the last three years of Herod's life, within which period the transaction here recorded took place."—*Paley*.

¹ The three Herods are thus distinguished :—

"Aschalonita necat pueros, Antipa Joannem, Agrippa Jacobum, claudens in carcere Petrum."

² "Ἀνείλε δὲ Ἰάκωβον—acta hæc sunt Hierosolymis, ubi Agrippa maximam partem commorabatur. Cf.

Joseph. Ant. xix. 7, 3.—ἀνείλε habebat enim jus vitæ et necis, ut ante eum procuratores Romani habuerant, vide *Walchius*, lib. l. p. 6, sq."—*Kuinoel*.

³ "S. Jaques a eu la primauté du martyre entre les Apôtres ; primauté plus avantageuse que celle qu'il demandait à nôtre Seigneur. Dieu redresse les desirs des siens, et les exauce en leur donnant quelque chose de meilleur que ce qu'ils demandent."—*Quesnel*.

⁴ "ἀναγαγεῖν, to bring him forth—Such proceedings used to be carried on

Herod persecuted the Church not, as it would seem, from any hatred to Christianity, nor from a conviction of its falsity, but in order to stand well with and to please the people, and he slew James from the same motive which led Pilate to permit the crucifixion of our Blessed Lord.¹ *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus . . . to be crucified.* This was the same motive which afterwards induced Felix, *willing to show the Jews a favour*, to leave *Paul bound* when he resigned his governorship. It is base in a subject to sin in order to stand well with his prince, as Joab did when he connived at the slaughter of Uriah the Hittite, and as *the men of his city* did when they aided Ahab in his desire for the death of Naboth; but far baser is it when a ruler sins in order to *please* the people over whom he ought to rule, and to whom by such actions he subjects himself. Nor can a ruler content his people by such sins, but will be driven as Herod was from sin to sin, in order to seek the favour of the people. Thus after the murder of James, Herod continued in the course of persecution on which he had entered, and took Peter with the like intention of slaying him.² In princes, as in people, the first temptation to sin, the first incentive to wrong, is that which they are called on most strenuously to resist. Easy is the descent from one wickedness to another. The desire to please the multitude is no excuse for evil, for the words of God are, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* In this spirit the Apostles acted, and when commanded by the authorities in Jerusalem to refrain from declaring that message of life which they had been bidden to make known to the world, Peter and John made answer, *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* The two prevailing motives which impel men to do wrong, or to avoid to do good, are the desire to please others and the fear of offending their fellow-men. Here Herod was moved by the pitiful desire of pleasing the Jewish people.

Then were the days of unleavened bread, the days, that is,

in elevated places. Therefore ἀναγείν is employed, and this by a metonymy of the antecedent for the consequent, viz. the punishment."—Bengel.

¹ "The motive of Agrippa was a desire to gain public favour. Josephus (Ant. xix. 7, § 3) attributes to this man the same trait of character; he describes

him as eager to ingratiate himself with the Jews."—Hackett.

² "Sæviit in Ananiam, in Saphiram: Petrus non sæviit in Herodem, à quo in vinculis detinebatur. In illis Dei injuriam vindicavit; noluit in isto vindicare suam."—Novarinus.

Lorinus.

John xix. 12.

Mark xv. 15.

Acts xxiv. 27.

2 Sam. xi. 16,
17.
1 Kings xxi.
11—14.

Dean Boys.

Quesnel.

Exod. xxiii. 2.

Acts iv. 19.

Bengel.

in which the Jews were, in obedience to the law, accustomed to come from all parts to Jerusalem,¹ so that the death and the witness which the Apostles by their sufferings gave to the truths of the gospel of Christ, were first seen and acknowledged by large multitudes of people, and were therefore a means to further, rather than, as their persecutors intended, to hinder, the knowledge of the crucified Saviour. Herod scrupled to put Peter to death at the time when this feast was held out of regard to the feelings of the same people whom he had gratified by the death of St. James. He therefore kept him in custody until the feast of the Jews would be at an end.²

Wesley.

Chrysostom.

1 Cor. v. 8.

Dean Boys.

Beugel.

Ferus.

Lange.

The mystery which the Jews were taught by the *unleavened bread* which they were bidden at this time to use, was that of purging out the old leaven of sin from the heart, so that they might approach God in worship, with minds and bodies undefiled by sin. They were to come, *not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* As, however, when Christ was to be condemned, the sanctity of the feast was disregarded and all its lessons set at nought, so this feast led them only to postpone the gratification of their *malice and wickedness*, not to purge out the evil passions from their hearts.

The days of unleavened bread. The same time of the year when Christ Himself was offered up was that chosen for the death of Peter, His Apostle.³ But not only was Christ crucified at this great national feast,—His forerunner and messenger, John the Baptist, was also put to death at a feast. In this we are warned that times of mirth and rejoicing are times of special temptation and too often of spiritual death to the Christian.

He put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers, that is, to four companies, each consisting of four men, who, according to the Roman custom, regularly relieved each other day and night ; and not content with this guard, the poor fisherman whom the Lord had sent forth to be His Apostle was guarded with additional rigour and bound by

¹ "Hi septem numero erant continui dies proxime post diem paschalis, à die 15 ad diem 21 mensis Nisanis, ita appellati quia Israelitæ se fermento, abstinebant per hosce dies." — *Patri-tius*.

² "Il voulut attendre que la feste fust passée, pour le faire mourir devant tout le peuple. Car il n'estoit pas

moins exact que les autres Juifs à observer les plus petites choses de la loy lorsqu'il la violait par les plus grands crimes." — *Tillemont*.

³ "The holy days of unleavened bread, or *Easter*, are celebrated with the murder of Christ first and of James after. This is the hypocrite's holiness." — *Baxter*.

chains to the two soldiers who were within the prison. This increased strictness in the watch set over Peter was probably resorted to because of the deliverance of the Apostles some time before, when *the angel of the Lord by night had opened the prison doors and brought them forth*, that they might stand and speak in the temple to the people the gospel of eternal life.¹ Novarinus.
Craddock.
Acts v. 19, 20.

Intending after Easter, or, more properly, after the pass-over, (μετὰ τὸ πάσχα). This is the only instance in which the translators of our version have used the latter word to express the Jewish feast. *To bring him forth to the people*, either, that is— Penn.

(1) For a public trial and condemnation, or

(2) That the people might take Peter and slay him, as the multitude had stoned Stephen, or else Lorinus.

(3) That he might be put to death at the close of the festival, as the martyrs were in after time often put to death, as part of the public spectacle. Corn. & Lap.

Not on the feast day, lest the festivity or solemnity of the occasion might be marred by the execution of Peter; or because the stricter Jews regarded it as a profanation to put a person to death on the feast, and Agrippa may have had the same scruple or have done this from his wish to please those who had such scruple. Patritius.
Hackett.

(5) *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.* 2 Cor. i. 11.
Eph. vi. 18.
1 Thess. v. 17.

Without ceasing, or rather ardently (ἐκτενῆς), fervently. The prayers of the disciples were probably unceasing because they were fervent, but this is implied rather than stated in the word itself.² Morus.

The brethren spent not their time in complaining of the injustice of the secular power. Though Herod was acting unjustly they employed their time in the most efficacious of all ways,—in prayer to God on behalf of Peter. With these arms with which God endows man, the faithful fought for Theophylact.

¹ "τίσσαντες τετραδίους—In military arrangements, Herod seems to have retained the Roman habits, according to which the night was divided into four watches, and each committed to four soldiers, to two of whom the prisoner was chained; the other two keeping watch before the doors of the prison, forming the *first* and *second* guards of

verse 10."—*Alford*.

² ἐκτενής occurs only in one other place of the New Testament, i. e. in 1 Pet. iv. 8, where it is translated *fervent*, "Have fervent charity among yourselves." The neut. comparative ἐκτενέστερον, Luke xxii. 44, is in the same way translated "*more earnestly*."—See *Buttman*, § 115, 5.

Ferus. the Apostle, and with this mighty weapon they conquered. They prayed not against Herod, but *for him* who was bound in prison by the tyrannical command of *Herod the king*. It was not their right to ask for vengeance against the oppressor, but for the deliverance of the oppressed. In this way did they fulfil the Christian duty of making entreaty to God for those who are suffering. *I exhort . . . that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*¹

Salmeron.

1 Tim. ii. 1.

Phil. iv. 6.

Note the emphasis with which St. Luke speaks of these prayers. It was not only prayer, but it was earnest or continual *prayer*, which was offered up,—prayer not to the earthly oppressor, but to *God* who is above all, the Almighty one ; and prayer, not on their own account, not for their deliverance from the like fate as that under which the Apostle was suffering, but *prayer for him*.

Wicelius.

Peter, therefore, was kept in prison. How strictly he was kept is shown in these four particulars: the soldiers to whom he was chained within the prison, the chains on his hands, the prison in which he was shut, the first and second watches which kept guard without. A testimony to the fear of the king, and of his desire to hinder or extinguish the truth.

Gorranus.

Acts v. 19.

(6) *And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers,² bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.* (7) *And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.*

Alford.

The same night, or that very night (τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ), preceding the day when he was to be brought forth and put

¹ "Ἀκούσατε πῶς διέκειντο πρὸς τοὺς διδασκάλους οὐκ ἰστασίασαν, οὐκ ἰθορυβήθησαν· ἀλλ' ἐπὶ εὐχῇ ἐτράπησαν, τὴν ὄντως συμμαχίαν."—*Theophylact*.

² "The soldier who was appointed to guard a particular prisoner had the chain fastened to the wrist of his left hand, the right remaining at liberty.

The prisoner, on the contrary, had the chain fastened to the wrist of his right hand. The prisoner and the soldier who had the care of him were said to be tied (*alligati*) to one another. Sometimes for greater security the prisoner was chained to two soldiers, one on either side of him."—*Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities*.

to death, Peter, casting all his care upon God, *was sleeping* Dion. Carth.
soundly between two soldiers. He, in his bonds, with death
 staring him in the face, slept, whilst those who were at
 large were watching and praying on his behalf.¹ His sleep Chrysostom.
 was not one of fatal self-confidence, as when he slept in
 the garden of Gethsemane, and awoke to deny his Master.
 It was a sleep of confidence in God,—a sleep which was Novarinus.
 sound because he knew that *He that keepeth Israel shall*
neither slumber nor sleep, but will be a perpetual defence of Ps. cxxi. 5.
 all them that trust in Him.²

Then, *when* the hour of the Apostle's death seemed close
 at hand, and no prospect of deliverance remained, the Lord
 sent His angel to release His servant. Thus does God
 oftentimes act towards us. He sends not in the beginning
 of trouble to ward it off, but He strengthens us to endure
 the trouble. He sends help not *when* we would, but when
 all hope has almost died out of the heart; *when* all other
 help fails, then does He show Himself the defender of all Ferus.
 those who trust in Him.³ So that the cry of the troubled
 soul is, *Why standest Thou so far off, O Lord, and hidest*
Thy face in the needful time of trouble? and in the end the Psal. x. 1.
 confession of the same soul is, *Lord, Thou hast heard the*
desire of the poor; Thou preparest their heart and Thine ear
hearkeneth thereto; to help the fatherless and poor unto their
right, that the man of the earth be no more exalted against Psal. x. 19, 20.
them.

Behold, an angel of the Lord, not the angel (ἄγγελος Κυρίου), Lange.
 an angel of the Lord was sent for the release of His serv-
 ant, as of old an angel had been sent to defend Jerusalem
 when besieged by the army of Sennacherib. The same
 means to rescue one, as to deliver the whole city and king- Isaiah xxxvii.
 dom of David, for God's protection is not less over one 36.
 than over many, as His providence regards equally the
 needs of one member of His body and the wants of the
 whole Church.⁴

¹ "Celui qui peut dormir en cet état, fait voir jusqu'où vont la tranquillité et la paix de son ame dans les plus grands perils, son mépris pour la vie, et sa confiance en Dieu."—*Quesnel*.

² "Inter vincula Petrus dormit, in Divinæ providentiæ sinu requiescens. Melior hic somnus, quàm ille, quo ante Christi passionem, corripiebatur. Somno inter vincula corripitur, qui vincula putabat ut somnia. Qui dormiebat inter catenas tacitè clamabat, catenis se posse vinciri, non vinci."—*Nova-*

rinus.

³ "God may many times suffer His children to come to the pit's brink, and then deliver them, that they may be more sensible of His mercy, and have the more evident matter of praising His name."—*Craddock*.

⁴ "These two chapters (Acts xii. and Isa. xxxvii.) beautifully illustrate each other, by displaying the rage of the world and its fierce passions against God and His Church. . . . It is not unworthy of remark, as a happy coin-

And a light shined around him—

1 John i. 5. (1) In token of the presence of an angel of God, who is *light—the uncreated Light.*

Æcumenius. (2) As a means by which Peter might see that it was not a phantom which beguiled him, but that it was the messenger of God who stood by his side.

Calvin. (3) As a means to dispel the darkness of the prison, and to enable Peter to rise and obey the commands of God.

Theophylact. *And he smote Peter on the side, to awaken him, so profound* were his slumbers at this time; *and then raised him up, and yet not so that he left nothing for Peter to do, for the angel bade him Arise up quickly, and in order to permit of his doing so, or on his obeying, his chains fell off from his hands.* He had not, as was usually the case, been bound to one soldier only, but, for additional security, he seems to have been fastened to the two soldiers. Where, however, God is present there can no chains bind. At His word all adverse things *fall off*, as these chains fell from the hands of Peter at the word of the angel of God.¹

Ps. cxxvi. 1.
Acts x. 3, 17;
xi. 5.

(8) *And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. (9) And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.*

Lange.

Gird thyself. The Apostle had cast off his outer garments in order to sleep. In this command, then, we have an incidental notice that he was still asleep when the angel came to him. *Gird thyself.* The Apostle was, in obeying this, not following his own natural inclination, which, had he desired to escape, would have led him to disregard the girding himself; but in all things he followed the command of his spiritual visitant, who taught him by these words that he needed no haste, nor had cause to fear any pursuit of man, since he was under the guidance and the protection of God.² *Bind on thy sandals.* The Apostle was called

Chrysostom.

evidence, that these two chapters [were in the old lectionary] appointed to be read on the same day in the calendar of daily lessons in the English Church, viz. on December 12."—*Wordsworth.*

¹ "Observe quod tripliciter consolatur Petrum: tripliciter enim gravatus erat, carcere, custodibus, catenis: contra tenebras carceris, accepit lumen:

contra custodes, Angelum: contra catenas, verbum, juxta illud, *secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum, consolationes tuas.* Consolatur et nos tripliciter: lumen internè, assistentia angelorum, consolatione verbi sui."—*Ferus.*

² "All these commands of the angel concerning St. Peter's attire (as *Valck.* has observed) are recited to show that

to enter again upon his ministerial work, and to put on again the sandals, and to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and to go forth from his prison to proclaim that message of salvation with which Christ his Master had intrusted him. Eph. vi. 15.
Bede.

Gird thyself. Thus early did the words of our Blessed Lord to Peter begin to be verified: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.* Wicelius.
John xxi. 18

He wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, so insensible was he, so profound are the slumbers of those who place their confidence on God. He was even at the touch of the angel scarcely able to shake off his sleep. His slumbers were so deep that even when he obeyed the voice of the angel and rose up, he still seemed to himself to be sleeping. Chrysostom
on Eph. iv.
1, 2.
Corn. & Lap.

(10) *When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.* (11) *And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.* Acts xvi. 26.
Job v. 19.
Ps. xxxiii. 18,
19; xxxiv. 7,
22; xli. 2;
xcvii. 10.
Dan. iii. 28;
vi. 22.
2 Cor. i. 10.
2 Pet. ii. 9.
Heb. i. 14.

When they were past the first and the second ward. Even in the miracles wrought by the Divine will there is no needless exertion of superhuman power. God, who made all natural helps, works by natural causes. Thus He who sent His angel to the prisoner, could as easily have lifted Peter out of his dungeon and placed him in the midst of the city, and in safety; but this would have been to disregard His ordinary ways of working, and so, even in this display of Almighty power, the ordinary ways of man are as little departed from as could be, and Peter was conducted on foot through the passages of the prison and the gates of the city. Again, no sooner was the Apostle in safety, and able Calvin.

there was no hurry in the transaction. 'Do not stay to bind on thy sandals' was a common phrase among the Greeks when they would excite a person to make haste. See *Theocrit.* xxiv. 35,

"Ανστα, μηδὲ πόδεσσι τειοῖς ὑπὸ σάνδαλα θείης."—*Wordsworth.* Note in *Æsch. Prom. Vinc.* v. 247, ἀπειδιλος ὄχω πτέρωτῳ.

Chrysostom.

Wesley.

Lange.
[End of
Epistle for
St. Peter's
Day.]Acts iv. 23 ;
xv. 37.

to preserve himself by his own powers, when there was no longer any hindrance to his movements, than *the angel departed from him*.¹ God supplies help when all human help fails or is clearly insufficient for man's deliverance ; when human means suffice, then He leaves us to these, for natural means, let us remember, are still God's means. All this appeared to Peter as though it were a vision seen in a trance, so little had he participated in what was done. He seemed out of himself. It was only when he was left to himself, when the *angel had departed from him*, and the Apostle came to *himself*, that all which had seemed a dream to him was found to be fact.² Until, however, he stood without the walls of the prison and found himself in the streets of the city he was not convinced of his deliverance.

(12) *And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark ; where many were gathered together praying.* (13) *And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.*

Hackett.

Cajetan.

Menochius.

Olshausen.

De Saef.

When he had considered—had become aware, and was conscious of the circumstances of his deliverance from prison, that is, when he had as it were awakened out of the trance into which he had been cast, and had *considered* where he was. The word seems to mean not so much that he *considered* the danger from which he had been rescued, and the greatness of the mercy which God had shown towards him, though this could not have been absent from his mind, it implies rather that he paused to set himself right as to where he was, the way which he should take, and the direction of the place of his retreat. Supernatural aid was now withdrawn as needless, and his natural powers were called into exercise to provide for his safety. Thus is it ever : when the angel of God no longer leads us, because such guidance is not necessary for us, then our consideration is required, and we are left free and are called upon to use our reason.

¹ "Cognovit Petrus Dei angelum à Deo missum, cum angelus discessit. Ita plerunque fit, ut Dei beneficia melius cognoscamus, cum à nobis subducuntur. Valetudinis donum vix cognoscimus cum adest ; bene cognoscimus cum abierit. Quia misit Dominus angelum suum : Beneficium in Deum refert, non in angelo sistit Petrus. Non dixit : nunc scio verè, quia ad me venit, mecumque

fuit angelus. Sed : nunc scio verè quòd misit Dominus angelum suum. Verum beneficii Auctorem cognoscit, verum confitetur : angelus minister est, Deique imperio paret. Verè non cognoscit beneficium per creaturas acceptum, qui sistit in creaturis."—*Novarinus*.

² "Petrus ad se reversus, i. e. percepit quod non erat somnium, sed res gesta."—*Gloss. Ordin.*

John surnamed *Mark*—thus distinguishing him from the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee—is called by either of these names, sometimes John, at others by that of Mark. He is generally supposed to be the same whom St. Peter calls his son—that is, his son in the faith, his convert,—and also that he was the writer of the second Gospel;¹ for though this has been questioned, and Mark and John Mark have been supposed by some to be two distinct persons, yet the former opinion is generally acquiesced in.

Peter directed his steps to the house of Mary the mother of Mark, where a company were gathered together, and were even then praying for him. They seem to have continued in prayer throughout the night, and it was in answer to their prayer, whilst they were still praying, that Peter stood without and *knocked* for admission. Such is the encouragement to the Church, as well as to every individual member of the Church, in every moment of danger and distress, to continue *instant in prayer*, knowing that God will answer earnest prayer as he answered that offered up for the safety of Peter by the Church assembled in the *house of Mary*.

A damsel came to hearken named *Rhoda*.² It has been suggested that this damsel was one of those assembled for prayer and worship; she may have been, as some understand, a servant, though the word which St. Luke uses (*παιδίσκη*)

¹ “Τάχα οὗτός ἐστι Μάρκος ὁ Εὐαγγελιστής, δι’ οὗ λέγουσιν ὅτι Πέτρος εὐαγγελίστατο· τὸ γὰρ Μάρκου εὐαγγέλιον Πέτρου λέγεται εἶναι πιθανὸς δὲ ὁ λόγος ἐξ ὧν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν κατέμενον ὃ τε Πέτρος καὶ οἱ λοιποί.”—*Ammonius*.

“This opinion, though controverted by some, appears to be correct, for the following reasons:—(1) We find St. Peter here connected with John, whose surname, or additional name, was Mark. (2) This John Mark was the companion and ἀνεψιὸς of Barnabas (Acts xii. 25; xv. 37, 39. Col. iv. 10). (3) Barnabas was under the influence of Peter. ‘Barnabas Petro familiarissimus’ (Bp. Pearson) was led away by Peter’s example at Antioch (Gal. ii. 13). (4) This swerving of Barnabas under Peter’s influence appears to have prepared the way for the *προξυσμὸς* between Paul and Barnabas (Acts xv. 36–39). See Bp. Pearson, A.P. ad A.D. 50. (5) Mark

was mixed up with this dispute, and after it, went away with Barnabas. (6) St. Peter calls Mark his son (1 Pet. v. 13). (7) This Mark is identified with the Evangelist by the early Church, which records that the Gospel of Mark was written under the eye of Peter (Euseb. ii. 15; iii. 39).”—*Wordsworth*.

² “Rhode, Ρόδη, Rosa.”—*Palritius*. “Her Greek name, Rhoda, does not disprove her Jewish origin. The portress among the Jews was commonly a female; see John xviii. 16. That the person should be known after so long a time shows how minute was Luke’s information.”—*Hackett*. “It was not unusual for the Hebrews to give the name of flowers to their daughters. Thus Susannah, a lily; Hadessa, a myrtle; Tamar, a palm tree.”—*Grotius*. “Ρόδη, rosa, nomen Græcum quod etiam in Menandri fragmentis occurrit, Hellenistæ ancilla fuisse videtur.”—*Kuinoel*.

Fromond.
Ruth iv. 12.
Xen. An. 4, 3,
11.

does not necessarily mean that she was a servant. In the Septuagint, as well as in classical Greek, the word is used for a free-born maiden.¹

We gather from this part of the narrative of Peter's deliverance—

(1) That the faithful still possessed their own houses at Jerusalem. All had not sold them.

Whitby.

(2) That the Christians were even in these days accustomed to meet at night for worship, at a time probably in which there was less danger of interruption from the Jews. For though it is possible that this assembly was an extraordinary one for the purpose of prayer for Peter who was to be led out to execution on the morrow, yet we know from other sources that such nightly meetings were held soon after because of the necessity of meeting in secret in order to avoid persecution.

Pliny, Epist.
97.

God delivers His people from danger, they know not always how. He does not appear as their deliverer at all times, even when the deliverance could only have come immediately from His hands. He would have us walk not by sight, not by the outward indications of the senses, even when those senses would make known His presence, but by faith.²

Salmeron.

Gen. xlviii. 16.
Matt. xviii.
10.

(14) *And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.* (15) *And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.*

Cook.

Col. iv. 10.

The minuteness of the narrative of what took place at the house of Mary when Peter came to the door would show that it comes from an eye-witness. It must have been related to St. Luke by one who was present on that night, when *many were gathered together praying*. This might well be, since doubtless Saul and Barnabas were amongst those assembled, and Barnabas we know was the relative of Mark. That they were assembled in fear of their enemies is evident, in the care which they had of closing

¹ "Souvent Dieu laisse dans l'oubli les noms des conquérans et conserve à l'Eglise de tous les siècles le nom d'une pauvre fille. Il nous apprend à estimer le bien par tout où il se trouve, sans égard à la condition."—*Quesnel*.

² "Non semper apparet Dominus præsens sed subtrahit Se, ut fides ex-

erceatur; quia nondum per speciem sed per fidem ambulamus. Docet etiam Petrus, ut post pericula agamus gratias, confiteamur Dei beneficia, Ipsumque glorificemus quòd nos pro bono nostro sive fratrum, vel pro gloria sua libera-verit."—*Salmeron*.

the doors, and not admitting any one until assured that he had not come to molest them.¹ Hofmeister.

They said, *It is his angel*, not a mere messenger, though the word (ἄγγελος) does not necessarily imply more than this, and hence some have supposed it only to mean that a messenger had come from him. The whole narrative, however, requires us to understand it to mean, that they thought the guardian angel of Peter had appeared in his form in answer to their prayers: that he who stood knocking was one of the spiritual ministers of God *sent forth to minister to His children*, the angel to whom had been assigned the care of Peter.² Hammond.
Olshausen.
Lightfoot.
Heb. i. 14.
Chrysostom.

(16) *But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.* (17) *But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.* Acts xiii. 16;
xix. 33.
xxi. 40.

Peter continued knocking—The angel had departed from him, and he who had passed through the prison doors, and from between the two soldiers to whom he had been chained, because an angel was with him, was now hindered from entering in to his friends because the door of the house was shut, and he was left to his own unassisted strength. Here again we have the same truth set before us; only when there is need does God interpose; when man's own powers, his natural strength, or his natural reason, suffices, then is man left to these powers, which though natural were given to him by God.³ Hofmeister.

Peter beckoned unto them with his hand, with the usual downward motion of the hand used when silence was required. The word is often used with reference to St. Paul. Acts xxi. 40.

¹ “Ὑπακούειν, quod notat Kuinoël ad h. 1, verbum est proprium de janatoribus, qui, antequam januam aperiant, quis adsit qui intronitti velit, interrogant.”—Beelen.

² “τοῦτο ἀληθές, ὅτι ἕκαστος ἄγγελον ἔχει.”—Chrysostom.

³ “Divus Petrus quem paulò antè nulla vincula, nullæ catenæ, nullæ portæ sive lignæ sive ferreæ prohibere vel remorari potuerunt, jam non potest

ingredi ad suos discipulos, nisi ipsi aperiantur fores domus illius. Quid enim opus est miracula facere, ubi ad id quo indigemus impetrandum, humana suppetunt media. Et si Apostoli omnia miraculosè fecissent, proveris, hoc est, naturalibus hominibus habitū non fuissent. Ergo absente Angelo, jam non patent Petro fores ultro, sed cogitur pulsare, ut aperiente alio ipse intrare queat.”—Hofmeister.

Hackett.

Acts i. 13.

Estius.

Acts viii. 4;
xi. 19.

Hofmeister.

When he had related the manner of his deliverance from prison, he bade them *go show these things unto James*, the chief pastor and bishop of Jerusalem, James the brother, as he is called, or kinsman of our Lord, the son of Alphæus, and then when he had done this, he withdrew from among them, *and went into another place*. For though God had thus wondrously delivered him from prison, yet was he required to use all ordinary precautions for his safety. The miracle was no excuse for presumption, and the Apostle departed most probably, not merely from the house, but from Jerusalem itself. In doing so, however, regard would be had not merely for the personal safety of the Apostle. He had his Master's message to bear wherever he might go. Those who *were scattered abroad* we know *went everywhere preaching the word*, and the withdrawal of St. Peter from Jerusalem would be but another call to him to make known the gospel to other regions than Judæa, and to other cities than that from which he had departed in order to avoid the sword of Herod.

(18) *Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.* (19) *And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and there abode.*

Estius.

There was no small stir among the soldiers on guard at the prison, because the escape of a prisoner was punished by the death of those who should have kept him. It is questionable, however, and it has been questioned, whether these soldiers were put to death or not. The words used (*ἐκέλευσεν ἀπαθῆναι*), though usually used of persons being led away to execution, are consistent with their being led away for examination, or of their being put into prison until an investigation could take place.¹ Hence these words have been understood to mean that Herod com-

¹ Ἐκέλευσεν ἀπαθῆναι — *Eos duci jussit*, aut in carcerem, aut ad supplicium. Ea enim verbi vis est. — *Loesner*. "*Jussit eos duci*. Ad extremum supplicium. Boni auctores Latini *duci*, sinè alio addito, dicunt pro trahi ad mortem." — *Menochius*. "De supplicio intelligit Syrus, Chrysostomus hom. in cap. 2, Matt. et hîc hom. xxvii.

et Salmeron; de carcere, historia scholastica, Carthusianus, Cajetanus, et Lyra. Illud de morte verisimilius." — *Sanchez*. "Ἀπάγεσθαι, εἰς θάνατον ἔλκεσθαι." — *Hesychius*. "Ita simpliciter vox usurpatur Act. xii. 19. Cf. Matth. xxvii. 2, 31; Luc. xxiii. 26; Joh. xix. 16." — *Ernesti*.

manded them to be led bound to Cæsarea for trial; and that the sudden death of Herod soon, or immediately after his arrival at Cæsarea, anticipated the execution and saved the soldiers from death, or that the sudden departure of Herod from Jerusalem prevented the prisoners from being executed, and that they were left prisoners in that city. Others hold that these soldiers were, in accordance with Roman martial law, put to death. The word would lead us to think so, though it does not necessarily follow from the word used that this was the case.

He went down from Judæa to Cæsarea. It has been already pointed out that Cæsarea, the civil and military capital of the province, inhabited almost exclusively by Romans and Greeks, was not considered a part of Judæa, and was not a Jewish city, either by origin or inhabitants. To this, the seat of power and of government, Herod went immediately on the deliverance of Peter—

(1) In order to preside at the public games in honour of the return of Claudius from his expedition to Britain.¹

(2) In order to escape from the ridicule which attached to the abortive attempt at the murder of Peter, which he seems to have attributed to treachery on the part of the guards or to some mere human instrument.

In this account of the deliverance of Peter out of prison we are taught—

(1) To what extent of cruelty those men will go who, having been intrusted with power on earth, use it for their own purposes, and in order to attain their own private ends. What wars have arisen from this ignoble source, that in waging them princes have felt that they *pleased the people*! what misery has had no higher excuse than this! By so doing, however, the prince at the most has *pleased the people* for a time, and has secured for a little longer his tottering throne.

(2) The danger of losing hold of all principles of right, if we make the obtaining the favour of *the people* the object of our lives.

(3) The way in which the commission of sin leads the way to fresh and deeper sin, and the difficulty which the

Cajetan.

Lyra.
Dion. Carth.
Hugo de S.
Charo.Rab. Maurus.
Gangæus.

Chrysostom.

Calmet.

Josephus.
Hackett.
Lewin, Fasti
Sacri 1674.

Chrysostom.

Sylvêira.

¹ "The festival which Agrippa attended at Cæsarea was certainly that for the return of Claudius from Britain. The news would reach Judæa in March or April, and the rejoicings would immediately follow; and this would be a little after the passover, as Luke states, and would be also, as Josephus

writes, just after the completion of Agrippa's third year, who had been appointed about 1 April, A.D. 41. The expression, *ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνου σωτηρίας ἑορτὴ* [Ant. xix. 8, 2] is also just the language that would be used to express Claudius' safe return from Britain."—Lewin's Fasti Sacri.

Stanhope. sinner has in retracing his steps. Herod first persecuted the Church by vexing, by harassing some of its members, and from this went on to murder, and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

(4) We are taught the mightiness of that weapon, of which man cannot despoil the Christian—earnest and continual prayer to God.¹

1 Kings v. 9,
11.
Ezek. xxvii.
17.

(20) *And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country.* (21) *And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.*

Alford.

In the minuteness of this account of the death of Herod we are reminded of the residence of St. Luke at Caesarea a few years after the events here related. This minuteness would lead us to attribute it to one who was either an eye-witness, or who had been able to gather the particulars on the spot, and we know that St. Luke was resident nearly two years at Caesarea, where he probably wrote the Gospel, and commenced this book of the Acts. His particularizing the disease with which Herod was struck is in accordance with his practice in both his books, and is what we should expect from him who was a physician.

Col. iv. 14.

Herod was *highly displeased*,² exasperated with the people of Tyre and Sidon, for some reason which is not mentioned

¹ "O Lord, who makest Thine angels messengers for my sake, and givest them charge over me in all my ways, that I hurt not my foot against a stone, and biddest them keep a watch over Thy flock, lest Thine adversary and ours should devour our souls, whilst there is none to deliver: Grant, O Lord, that they may be ever with us, to strengthen us in all our labours, to protect us in the hours of rest, to encourage us in our conflict with our spiritual enemies, to crown us in our victory over temptation, and to rejoice in our rejoicings when we rejoice in Thee. And as we entreat Thee to grant us their continual presence, so we

thank Thee for their past care over us, for their protection in the moment of danger, and for the consolation which they administer in the hours of adversity. Grant, we beseech Thee, that they who rejoice over those who abide in the way of Thy commandments may always rejoice over us, that Thou mayest always be glorified in our lives, and they with us and we with them may be ever in the one fold, and may unite our praises to Thee, the Lord of angels and of men."—*Dean Brough.*

² "θυμολαχέω—this is a word which does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is used in this sense in Pol. 9, 40, 4.

—and as he had it in his power to prevent the importation of corn into the maritime cities from Judæa, and they were in a great measure dependant upon the corn-lands of that province for their supplies, and were thus in the words of St. Luke, *nourished by the king's country*,¹ they sent an embassy or deputation to remove the king's displeasure, in which by securing the interest of *Blastus*, the *chamberlain* of Herod, they succeeded. By the peace which they desired is not to be understood that there was war or fear of formal war, since these cities, as well as Judæa, were parts of the Roman Empire. Any interruption of commercial relations, any hindrance to the exportation of goods from Tyre and Sidon into Judæa, or of corn from Judæa into Phœnicia, would have greatly injured the prosperity of these cities, and to prevent this the embassy appears to have gone to Cæsarea.² Whilst the embassy was there, probably because they were there, Herod in more than ordinary magnificence, *in royal apparel*, a garment of silver tissue we are told, ascended the tribunal or *bema*, and from this throne made an oration unto them.³

Hackett.
1 Kings v. 9.
Ezra iii. 7.
Ezek. xxvii.
17.

Beelen.

Joseph. Ant.
xix. 8, § 2.

(22) *And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.* (23) *And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms,⁴ and gave up the ghost.*

1 Sam. xxv.
38.
2 Sam. xxiv.
17.
Ps. cxv. 1.

¹ "Cela insinue que c'était alors les tems de la famine qui arriva sous Claude. Les Tyriens avaient plus que jamais besoin de vivres et ils voulurent faire leur paix avec Herode, pour en recevoir de son pais. Or cette famine arriva l'an quatre de Claude; et c'est environs ce tems-là qu' Herode Agrippa mourut."—*Beausobre*.

² "Pax non tantum bello, sed et ἀκαταστασίαις, 1 Cor. xiv. 33, et τῷ μαχέσθαι lisis privatis et τῷ ἀδικεῖν, Act. vii. 26. opponitur, et εἰρήνην ἔχουσι, Act. ix. 31, qui quiete et tranquillivivunt. Rogabant igitur hæ urbes, ne ipsarum turbaret tranquillitatem et ne ipsas, commateum transvectione aliove commercio impedito, aliisve modis, quos facile suppeditat vicinitas, permeret atque infestaret."—*Kypke*.

³ Βῆμα, not throne, as in our version, but *suggestus*, tribunal for judges or orators at public assemblies.

⁴ "Luke the physician is more exact in his description of the disease than Josephus, who simply says, γαστρὸς ἀλγίμασι διεργασθεῖς. This horrible and unusual disease caused the death of several cruel tyrants, and is regarded as a special visitation of God by the various historians who mention examples of it. Thus Herod. iv. 205, ἡ Φερετῖμη ζωσα εὐλέων ἐξέζεσε· ὥς ἄρα ἀνθρώποισι αἱ λιαν ἰσχυραὶ τιμωρίαι πρὸς θεῶν ἐπιφθονοὶ γίνονται. 2 Macc. v. 9 (Antiochus Epiphanes). Eusebius viii. 16 (the Emperor Maximus Galerius). Tertull. ad Scap. iii. 'Claudius Lucius Herminianus in Capadocia cum indigne ferens uxorem suam ad hanc sectam transiisse Christianos crudeliter tractasset, solusque in prætoris suo vastatus peste, cum vivis, verminibus ebullisset; nemo sciat, aiebat, ne gaudeant Christiani. Herod the Great, the grandfather of this

This deification of sovereigns was at that time creeping in among the subjects of the Roman Empire. The emperors were, at first, upon their death, and afterwards during their life-time, enrolled among the gods, and received from a servile people Divine honours. The same servile and idolatrous sycophancy was shown to others, as in this instance of Herod.¹

Arias Mont.

Bengel.

Herod had been taught the great power of God by the deliverance of Peter, but he refused to learn the lesson which this miracle was fitted to teach him, and puffed up with the favour of the Roman Emperor and the adulation of the people, which he sought by all means, he accepts the blasphemous honours of the people. He is not blamed, nor was he punished, because of this excessive adulation of the multitude, but because the praises which were due to the Almighty only were accepted and retained (*οὐκ ἔδωκε*) to himself.² Far less injurious to him had been the enmity of Tyre and Sidon than the flatteries with which they sought to purchase his friendship.³

The death of Herod, who was stricken by the angel because he had accepted and appropriated to himself the honour due to God alone, was a striking testimony to the sin of the Jewish people in rejecting Christ, and a con-

Herod Agrippa, died of the same disease. Joseph. Ant. xvii. 6, 5."—*Humphrey*.

¹ "Ita plebs Persiana uti et Romana, adulando suis principibus, eis consuevit attribuire titulos divinos ut prudentiores graviter offensi sunt his stultitiis. Unde Isocrates in Panegyri. declarat Persas 'tanquam fracti et objecti animi viros, qui Diis debitos honores, mortali Regi tribuerent.'"—*Lumina Reflexa. Ph. Picinello*.

² "Occiderunt vermes, qui se vermen non putabat. Non esset verminibus absumptus impius iste rex, si se, pii regis mente, vermi comparasset."—*Novarinus*.

³ The account which Josephus gives of this scene may well be compared with the narrative of St. Luke. The Jewish historian says, "When Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judæa, he came to the city Cæsarea; which was formerly called Strato's tower. And there he exhibited shows, in honour of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival

celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were of dignity through his province; on the second day of which shows, he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a texture truly wonderful; and came into the theatre early in the morning. At which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the first reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner: and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him. And presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place and one from another; (though not for his good;) that 'He was a god.' And they added, 'Be thou merciful to us. For although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery."—*Jewish Antiq.*, Book xix. c. 8, § 2, Whiston's transl.

firmation of His claims whom they had crucified. Herod accepted the honour due to God alone and was punished. Christ made Himself equal to God, and yet so far was He from being struck by an angel and punished for blasphemy, that, when crucified by the people, He was raised by the Father from death, and was openly manifested to be indeed Divine. De Sac.

He was eaten of worms—struck, as it would seem, for death on the throne, or *bema*, in the midst of the blasphemies of the people, and dying miserably on the fifth day after. Hackett.
The death of Herod at this time we learn also from Josephus, the particular kind of death, however, only from the physician Luke.¹ With the death of Herod Agrippa expired the nominal kingdom which he governed, and Judæa then came under the immediate rule of Cuspius Fadus, the Roman Procurator, since the tender years of Herod's son did not permit of his succeeding to the station of his father. Krebs. SA.

It is the misfortune of princes that their position tempts the people who seek favour from them to flatter them at every moment, so that unless they have grace to resist the temptation, and to remember their dependence upon God, they are lifted up, lose their humility, and forget that they equally with the meanest of their people are the creatures of God.² Haré.

(24) *But the word of God grew and multiplied.*

(25) *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.* Is. lv. 11.
Acts vi. 7;
xl. 20, 30
xiii. 5, 13;
xv. 37; xix.
20.
Col. i. 6.

In this death of Herod Agrippa we see the fulfilment of the Psalmist's words, that *Blood-thirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days*, but that *the word of the Lord endureth for ever*, unmoved by the fall of princes, and the overthrow of evil men.³ The persecution with which Ps. lv. 25.,
1 Pet. i. 25.
Ferus.

¹ There is nothing in the narrative which Josephus gives of the death of Herod (see Jewish Antiq. xix. 8, § 2) which is at variance with St. Luke's account; the only seeming difference is, that Josephus speaks of "a severe pain in his belly" as occurring immediately after his acceptance of the impious flattery of the people, and as connected with it, and that he died on the fifth day after, in "violent pain." St. Luke says that he was "eaten of

worms." St. Luke, both as a physician, and also as having dwelt for a time at Cæsarea, would be better able to speak with precision on this subject than Josephus could.

² "Perniciosa adulatio perpetuum regum malum est, quorum opes assentatio sæpius, quàm hostis evertit."—*Quint. Curtius*, l. 8.

³ "*Verbum Dei*—Mortuo falso Deo veri Dei verbum crescit in fidelibus."—*Gorranus*.

Herod tried the Church, like persecution in general, only resulted in the increase of the Church, and the death of this persecutor was so signal a mark of the almighty power of Him who is the head of the Church, that this augmented the numbers of the believers, and deepened their faith and confidence in God, who could deliver Peter from the hand of Herod and slay the persecuting king. *The word of God grew and multiplied:—*

(1) The word of God, like seed, was scattered far and wide, and spread on all sides—it was *multiplied*.¹

(2) It *grew* in the heart of the faithful: their faith was strengthened at this sure evidence of the mighty and protecting hand of God.²

*Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch after they had distributed the alms, the ministry entrusted to them, taking with them, however, as an assistant in the work which was now enlarging upon them, John whose surname was Mark, the son of that Mary at whose house the brethren had assembled to offer up prayers on behalf of Peter. Saul is yet uncalled to his great work of being the Apostle of the Gentiles, and it is still Barnabas and Saul, a position of names which shows the relative estimate in which the two Apostles were at that time held.*³

¹ “*Crescebat et multiplicabatur — Multa hominum fruge: verbum enim Evangelicum germini comparatur.*”—*Grotius*.

² “Non minuitur persecutionibus Ecclesia, sed augetur. Et semper Dominicus ager segete ditiori vestitur, dum grana, quæ singula cadunt, multiplicata nascuntur.—*S. Leo*, Sermon. I.

in Natali St. Peter et Pauli. Idem à pari, vel suppari, fit in quovis fideli, Ille enim in tentatione et adversitate, virtute et viribus crescit, instar palmæ.”—*Corn. à Lapide*.

³ “*Ἐν Βαρνάβᾳ πρῶτον μνημονεύει· οὕτω γὰρ Παῦλος ἦν λαμπρὸς· οὕτω σημείον οὐδὲν εἰργάσατο.*”—*Chrysostom*.

END OF VOL. I.

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